'A Glutton and a Drunkard': Excessive and 'Deviant' Consumption of Food and Alcohol in the Hebrew Bible in relation to the Law of the Rebellious Son (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)

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Abstract

The Law of the Rebellious Son (Deut 21:18-21) has traditionally been understood as condemning the excessive consumption of food and alcohol. This thesis, however, interrogates this interpretation by contextualising the roles of food and alcohol in Israelite and Judahite cultures. By drawing attention to the social agency of food and alcohol, it becomes apparent that such consumable items had social, ritual, and nutritive functions which were inextricably linked to the socio-religious cultures of Israel and Judah.

This thesis uses a multi-disciplinary approach to examine how food and alcohol were produced and consumed within the Israelite and Judahite household. Archaeological and anthropological approaches in particular draw attention to the roles that 'things', animals, men, women, and deities carried out. Foodstuffs are demonstrated to be inherently ritual items in nature which impact the lives of others through the formation, maintenance, and destruction of socio-religious relationships and identities. Specific attention is paid to the roles of beer and wine in elite and non-elite contexts of Israel and Judah, and the privileging of wine over beer in biblical texts and modern scholarship is also addressed. Biblical texts which present scenes of excessive consumption of food and alcohol are examined in order to determine if such behaviours are treated similarly to the crime of the Rebellious Son. While some contexts of excessive consumption are problematic in certain biblical texts, they are not criticised in a comparable way to the Rebellious Son's crime. Subsequently, scenes of 'deviant' consumption are also compared to the crime of the Rebellious Son, which prove to better elucidate the anxieties at play in Deut 21:18-21.

This thesis argues that the Rebellious Son is not guilty of the excessive consumption of food and alcohol. Instead, it is the 'deviant' context of consumption that evokes condemnation, and execution, in this law. As a result, the importance of contextualising ancient texts in their socio-religious milieus is emphasised in order that modern biases are not anachronistically imposed onto ancient texts.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Overview

> If someone has a rebellious and defiant son who will not obey the voice of his father and mother, who does not heed them when they discipline him, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his town at the gate of that place. They shall say to the elders of his town: 'This son of ours is rebellious and defiant. He will not obey us. He is a זולל and a סבא.' Then all the men of the town shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst; and all Israel will hear and fear.[1] (Deut 21:18-21)

The so-called Law of the Rebellious Son is a particularly curious piece of biblical legislation in which stoning is presented as an appropriate punishment for the crime of being a זולל וסבא. This phrase is usually translated as 'a glutton and a drunkard', which suggests it indexes excessive consumption.[2] However, the dynamics of this behaviour and the reason why it might provoke such a serious punishment have received little critical analysis. Older generations of biblical commentators tended not to interrogate this allegation of being a זולל וסבא, relying instead on the occurrence of this phrase in Prov 23:21-2 as a lens for interpretation. Such an approach led to the assumption that the crime is one of costly eating and drinking that risks the impoverishment of the family. However, since the 1970s some scholars have given more attention to this law and have attempted to understand why the actions of the son might necessitate such a punishment.[3] Overall, these studies have continued to adopt the

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[1] Translations my own unless stated otherwise.
[2] Similarly, the LXX renders the phrase: συμβολοκοπῶν οἰνοφλυγεῖ.
[3] Mordechai Rotenberg and Bernard L. Diamond, 'The Biblical Conception of Psychopathy: The Law of the Stubborn and Rebellious Son', *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 7 (1971), 29-38; Elizabeth Bellefontaine, 'Deuteronomy 21: 18-21: Reviewing the Case of the Rebellious Son', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 13 (1979), 13-31; Calum M. Carmichael, 'Uncovering a Major Source of Mosaic Law: The Evidence of Deut 21:15-22:5', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101 (1982), 508-511; Phillip R. Callaway, 'Deut 21: 18-21: Proverbial Wisdom and Law' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103 (1984), 341-352; Anselm C. Hagedorn, 'Guarding the Parents' Honour—Deuteronomy 21.18-21', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25 (2000), 101-21; Jonathan P. Burnside, *The Signs of Sin: Seriousness of Offence in Biblical Law* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 37-78; Joseph Fleishman,

translation of זולל וסבא as a phrase indicating excessive consumption, and have consequently explained that the son was understood to be exhibiting a lack of self-control and thus was disruptive to social norms and a threat to economic stability.

In recent decades there has been a shift towards the use of material culture in reconstructing the historical realities underlying biblical texts, which consequently has encouraged their more critical social and cultural analysis. As such, more robust interpretations of a variety of biblical texts are possible if they are contextualised within the material cultures of ancient Israelite and Judahite societies. Anthropological and archaeological insights have shed new light on the social worlds of ancient Israel and Judah; in the light of this research it is evident that the Law of the Rebellious Son would also benefit from the fruits of such approaches. In particular, the increased understanding of diet and foodways in ancient Israelite and Judahite contexts has been advanced by a growing interest in everyday life, as well as the unearthing and recording of food remains and processing installations in archaeological excavations.[4]

Scholars who make use of such findings are now better placed to interpret biblical texts which refer to cooking and eating activities. For example, Cynthia Shafer-Elliott uses archaeological remains and complementary ancient southwest Asian sources to contextualise biblical narratives dealing with cooking activities.[5] Carol Meyers has addressed food in relation to the social and religious lives of ancient Israelite and Judahite women in several articles and monographs.[6] These are promising advances in our understanding of

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'Legal Innovation in Deuteronomy xxi 18-20' *Vetus Testamentum* 53 (2003), 311-27; Bruno J. Clifton, 'What if Israel was God's stubborn and rebellious son? Deuteronomy 21:18–21; Jeremiah 5:23; Psalm 78:8', in *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 20 (2014), 115-126.

[4] I define foodways as the system of activities pertaining to the production, preparation, cooking, distribution, storage, consumption and expulsion of food including the socio-religious associations these activities may have. See also Christine Hastorf, *The Social Archaeology of Food: Thinking about Eating from Prehistory to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 14.

[5] Cynthia Shafer-Elliot, *Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Bible* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2013).

[6] For example Carol Meyers, 'Having Their Space and Eating There Too: Bread Production and Female Power in Ancient Israelite Households' *Nashim*, 5 (2002), 14-44; Carol Meyers, 'Material Remains and Social Relations: Women's Culture in Agrarian Households of the Iron Age' in William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin eds. *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 425–44; Carol Meyers, '*In the Household and Beyond: The Social World of Israelite Women', Nordic Journal of Theology* 63 (2009), 19-41; Carol Meyers,

consumption in this ancient context, yet there is ground still to be covered. To date, no study of the Law of the Rebellious Son has been situated within a thorough consideration of the foodways and drinking practices of the Israelites and Judahites. This oversight is surprising, given the text's unusual association of excessive consumption with capital punishment. Interrogating this law within the context of the material cultures of diet and foodways thus opens promising avenues for better understanding the criminal behaviour indicated by the phrase זולל וסבא.

In this thesis, I will offer several contributions to existing and future scholarship. First and foremost, a developed understanding of the biblical phrase זולל וסבא will reflect more precisely its likely meaning held by ancient scribes, and challenge the perpetuation of the commonly-used English translation: 'a glutton and a drunkard' by scholars. By discussing the social roles and impact of those consumable items that were inherently a part of the religious lives of ancient Israelites and Judahites, I will develop a more nuanced framework for understanding constructions of 'normative' consumption and 'abnormal' consumption. In doing so, I hope to be able to illuminate why certain food and drink practices were so contested, what the ramifications of excessive consumption might have been, and why certain forms of consumption were rendered 'deviant'.

Aim and scope

Scholarship dealing with food in the Hebrew Bible has tended to focus on the topic of food purity laws (found, for example, in Leviticus 11 and Deut 12:3-22).[7] However, as I will demonstrate throughout this thesis, there are much broader and richer contexts in which to consider the roles of food and drink in biblical

'Household Religion' in Francesca Stavrakopoulou and John Barton eds. *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* (London: T & T Clark, 2010), 118-34; Carol Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); See also Carol Meyers *Households and Holiness: The Religious Culture of Israelite Women (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005).*

[7] For example, Jacob Milgrom, 'The Biblical Diet Laws as an Ethical System: Food and Faith', *Union Seminary Magazine* 17 (1963), 288-301; Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966); Walter Houston, *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); Jean Soler, 'The Semiotics of Food in the Bible', in Carol Counihan and Penny Van Estrik eds. *Food and Culture: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 55-66; Naphtali S. Meshel, 'Food for thought: systems of categorization in Leviticus 11' *Harvard Theological Review* 101 (2008), 203-229.

texts - especially when material cultures are considered and employed in interpretation.

While the food laws, particularly in relation to pork consumption, have often been employed in debates regarding 'Israelite' ethnicity *vis a vis* the Philistines, I will not discuss ethnicity in great detail.[8] Ethnicity is a problematic term and concept in regard to ancient societies, and there is no way of securing what 'Israelite' ethnicity was.[9] Thus, issues pertaining to construction of 'ethnicity' will only briefly be commented on where necessary, and further debate highlighted in the footnotes. By contrast, the labour of food production and processing tended to be divided along gendered lines in ancient Israelite or Judahite contexts, and thus is bound up with the idea that certain food-related activities have a role in the construction of identity. Issues pertaining to gender will therefore be considered in relation to the role of food as a social agent.

The aim of this thesis is to explore how the accusation of being a זולל וסבא is best understood in its ancient socio-religious context. The thesis provides, to the best of my knowledge, the first full-length study of excessive and 'deviant' consumption in the Hebrew Bible, and thus offers a more comprehensive contextualisation of the Law of the Rebellious Son (Deut 21:18-21).

One objective of this study is to present the foodways of the ancient Israelite and Judahite household as inherently 'religious' and embedded in a world permeated by deities, deceased ancestors, and underworldly entities. While previous scholarship has addressed basic questions pertaining to food practices (such as food staples, taboo foods, and the practicalities of production and consumption), few have integrated this approach with the socio-religious functions of food as material culture, neglecting to consider the roles of food and drink as material agents. This idea will be developed later, but for now I will summarise by saying that non-human 'things' can be seen as agents if they have impact on other 'things' or humans. For example, at household meals participants in consumption were bonded via the food and drink they ingested. So, while food impacts consumers by having a physiological change in their

[8] Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò, 'Food or Drink? Pork or Wine? The Philistines and their "Ethnic" Markers', *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 29 (2015), 110-116.
[9] For a critique of the idea of an Israelite ethnicity see Diana Edelman, 'Ethnicity and Early Israel' in Mark G. Brett ed. *Ethnicity and the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 25-55.

bodies when ingested, it also changes them socially by constructing and maintaining, or disrupting and destroying, social networks. This will be discussed in more detail below. In sum, focusing on 'normative' socio-religious consumption will provide the context essential for a more nuanced understanding of the phrase זולל וסבא and the social and religious anxieties it might index.

Overview of the Study

This thesis consists of six further chapters, set within two parts. In the rest of my introduction I will situate the current study within existing research, and establish the research methods used in this project. I will give an overview of previous scholarship concerning the Law of the Rebellious Son, and discuss recent works relating to the foodways of ancient Israelites and Judahites, upon which this thesis will build. Combining these insights, I will argue for the need to contextualise the interpretation of the Law of the Rebellious Son within the material cultures of the ancient Israelites and Judahites, specifically in relation to the roles food and alcohol played. Based on that, the most pressing gaps in the scholarly literature will be identified and research questions will be posed accordingly. I will lay out the inter-disciplinary research methods to be implemented in properly understanding food, alcohol, and modes of consumption for ancient Israelites and Judahites. I will discuss why multiple methods are necessary and the relationship between them.

In Chapters 2 and 3 I explore and assess the ubiquitous ritual roles of food and alcohol in ancient Israelite and Judahite contexts. These chapters cover the roles of animals, humans and divine beings in the production and consumption of food and alcohol in interconnected and interdependent household networks. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 discuss biblical portrayals of excessive and 'deviant' consumption and offer, in the light of the previous chapters, a more rigorous and culturally-nuanced interpretation of the phrase זולל וסבא in the Law of the Rebellious Son. In particular, Chapter 4 specifically deals with excessive consumption of food and Chapter 5 with excessive consumption of alcohol. Against this backdrop, Chapter 6 turns to the biblical portrayals of 'deviant' consumption of food and drink, and assesses the accusation and punishment of

the Rebellious Son in order to recommend a preferred rendering of the phrase זולל וסבא. Chapter 7, the conclusion, draws together the overall argument of this thesis, highlighting my contribution to scholarship and the potential ways my approach could be extended to future projects.

1.2 Research Context and Research Questions

Previous Scholarship on the Law of the Rebellious Son

Previous work on the interpretation of the Law of the Rebellious Son has uncritically accepted זולל וסבא as meaning 'a glutton and a drunkard'. To a notable extent, this proclivity can be blamed on the modern preferences scholars tend to project on to ancient texts. For example, in modern Western cultures, excessive consumption of food and alcohol is often seen as evidence of a lack of self-control and is frequently associated with conspicuous wealth and social injustice. A more problematic association is that of excessive consumption with obesity, an unfounded prejudice which many today would consider to be 'fat-shaming'. Thus, excessive consumption today carries with it a host of negative connotations which were not likely applicable to the ancient context in which lack of food was more common than its surfeit.

Scholars' interpretations of the Law of the Rebellious Son have also been influenced by text-critical approaches. They tend to approach this text in one of two ways: some perceive the phrase זולל וסבא to be a secondary insertion, and therefore interpret the law within which it is embedded without engaging with the phrase זולל וסבא;[10] others accept the general unity of the law in its Masoretic form and therefore view the accusatory phrases 'stubborn and rebellious' (Deut 21:18, 20) and זולל וסבא as closely related. In accepting the general unity and coherence of the Law of the Rebellious Son, scholars have used a range of approaches to explore this legal text. In a piece from 1971, for example, Mordechai Rotenberg and Bernard L. Diamond set out to align the behaviours

[10] Most scholars do not provide an explanation as to why the phrase is a later insertion or 'gloss', but instead assume it on the basis of Prov 23:21 which is thought to be earlier. See Hagedorn, 'Guarding the Parents' Honour', 103; Andrew D. H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (London: Oliphants, 1979), 203, 204-5. Fleishman, however, provides a more substantial argument for his opinion and explains it is a legal innovation, discussed below. Fleishman, 'Legal Innovation in Deuteronomy', 325.

of the Rebellious Son with those of a psychopath or one diagnosed with an antisocial personality disorder.[11] Their argument draws on post-biblical interpretations of the biblical law, including those of Philo, the Talmud and Josephus, which further elaborate on the crimes of the Rebellious Son and emphasise the excessive consumption of food - especially meat - and wine.[12] Rotenberg and Diamond then compare these accounts with the modernist psychiatric notion of the sociopath and speculate that they are 'essentially the same'.[13] This approach, however, is deeply problematic. It anachronistically projects a modern classification of a medical condition and associated behaviours on to an ancient text without interrogating the social world of that text.[14]

Frequently, works that address the Law of the Rebellious Son accept the English translation of זולל וסבא as 'a glutton and a drunkard' without interrogating the Hebrew words or contextualising further discussion in the socio-religious uses of food and alcohol. Such an approach is arguably the result of privileging texts over materiality. Phillip Callaway, for example, develops the idea that the mention of זולל and סבא in Prov 23:21 is found in vestigial form in the law from Deut 21:18-21. Prov 23:21 is traditionally rendered: 'for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe them with rags.' Callaway mentions that the phrase's function in Deut 21:18-21 was to explain and characterise the behaviour of the son who should be put to death, but he does not elaborate any further than stating that it is usually translated as 'a

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[11] Rotenberg and Diamond, 'The Biblical Conception of Psychopathy', 29-38.

[12] Josephus does not comment on what it means to be accused of being a זולל וסבא but instead on the application of the law of the Rebellious Son more generally, see Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews,* W. Whiston trans. (Baltimore: Armstrong & Plaskitt, 1830), Book IV, Chapter VIII, 94. Philo of Alexandria, however, does not translate συμβολοκοπῶν as referring to gluttony but instead divides the Greek word into two parts: 'Of the two elements of which it is compounded he takes the first συμβολαί to represent "contributions" or "combinations" for evil, while the other (κοπῶν) shews the "cutting" or destructive force of these contributions (20-24), against which we are warned in the words, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (25).' F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker 'Introduction' in Philo, *Vol. III, On Drunkenness,* F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker trans. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Loeb Classical Library, 1930), 310. For οἰνοφλυγεῖ, however, Philo renders 'fired with wine' and suggests that this 'is as much as to say that the poison which causes folly, indiscipline, smoulders within the man, then bursts into fire and flame impossible to quench, and consumes the soul through its whole being with the conflagration...We see then this man as disobedient, as strife-loving, as providing in the form of persuasive arguments 'contributions' and 'clubmoney' for the subversion of morality, and finally inflamed with strong drink and making drunken assaults on virtue and directing his monstrous orgies against her.' Philo, *Vol. III, On Drunkenness,* F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker trans. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Loeb Classical Library, 1930), 333.

[13] Rotenberg and Diamond, 'The Biblical Conception of Psychopathy', 38.

[14] This has also been noted by Burnside, *The Signs of Sin,* 45.

glutton and a drunkard'.[15] Thus, neither the Law of the Rebellious Son, nor the text from Proverbs, is reassessed in Callaway's treatment.

Calum Carmichael seeks to link every law in Deut 21:15-22:5 to a narrative tale elsewhere in the Pentateuch.[16] Regarding the Law of the Rebellious Son, Carmichael identifies a 'causal link' with the figure of Esau in Gen 25:27-28:9.[17] He is careful to admit that Esau is not described in the same way as the Rebellious Son, but suggests that he may have the potential to be like the Rebellious Son.[18] As Carmichael accepts the English rendering of זולל וסבא as 'a glutton and a drunkard', he looks to texts involving some kind of excessive or uncontrolled consumption.[19] In Gen 25:29-34 Esau is so desperate for the lentil stew which Jacob is making that he sells his birthright and 'gulps' down the food. Carmichael states: 'The tradition depicts in a negative light his appetite for meat dishes…He seems to have an inordinate craving for such dishes.'[20] In addition, after taking two Hittite women as wives who make life bitter for his parents Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 26:34-5), Esau obeys their command not to take another Canaanite wife (Gen. 28:1-9). Carmichael interprets the Law of the Rebellious Son as an elaboration on Esau or an example of what should have happened if a son like Esau had continued to displease and disobey his parents.[21] As Carmichael does not provide a proper contextualisation of food and alcohol consumption and their associations, he takes as his starting point the rendering of זולל וסבא as 'a glutton and a drunkard' which sets the direction he then takes in finding his 'source material' for this law. What is intriguing about Carmichael's argument is his observation that Esau is regarded as rebellious by taking Canaanite wives, which points to some kind of deviation from imagined 'Israelite' social norms. Carmichael grasps towards a more

[15] Callaway, Deut 21: 18-21: Proverbial Wisdom and Law, 343.
[16] Carmichael, 'Uncovering a Major Source of Mosaic Law', 505-6. Carmichael's approach begins with the idea that in order to decipher what Moses' judgement would be on different judicial scenarios, a lawmaker created formal legal material out of the literary traditions in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Thus, each law can be seen to have originated in a narrative text, but is developed or modified in ways that may or may not make it look quite different to its narrative source. Carmichael also does this for the Book of Numbers and its relation to material in Genesis in *The Book of Numbers: A Critique of Genesis* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2012).
[17] Carmichael, 'Uncovering a Major Source of Mosaic Law', 508-511.
[18] Carmichael, 'Uncovering a Major Source of Mosaic Law', 511.
[19] Carmichael, 'Uncovering a Major Source of Mosaic Law', 509-10.
[20] Carmichael, 'Uncovering a Major Source of Mosaic Law', 510.
[21] Carmichael, 'Uncovering a Major Source of Mosaic Law', 509-510.

textured approach to the Law of the Rebellious Son, but does not apply this to his understanding of the eating and drinking practices themselves.

Some attempts at situating the Rebellious Son in his social context have been made. Jonathan Burnside addresses the Law of the Rebellious Son within his monograph *The Signs of Sin: Seriousness of Offence in Biblical Law* that deals with wider issues of crime and sin in biblical texts. As such, he does attempt to establish a wider social context for the Rebellious Son. For example, he suggests that the accusation of being a זולל וסבא implicated not only the excessive and public consumption of food and alcohol, but also the indication of further private rebelliousness against one's parents.[22] Additionally he says 'drunkenness is seen as a typical example of an apostate or a pagan lifestyle'.[23] In addition to his problematic use of the term 'pagan', he offers no supportive evidence to demonstrate that so-called 'pagans' drank excessively aside from a New Testament text, 1 Peter 4:3. While this New Testament text is unconvincing in its use in his argument, Burnside does attempt to highlight the otherness of the Rebellious Son's drinking, though he does not fully flesh this out. Burnside also compares the Rebellious Son to the story of Hophni and Phineas (1 Sam 2:12-25) in order to bolster his assertions, but this muddles the issue further because these priests are serving at a Yahwistic shrine, and are not representative of 'pagan' religion at all.[24] Hophni and Phineas also do not drink alcohol in this text and their consumption of food, while problematic, is not signalled as excessive. Like most other scholars I critique here, he utilises the typical English translation of זולל וסבא and thus defines a 'glutton' as one who eats until he vomits, allowing him to consume more, and a 'drunkard' as somebody who guzzles wine and is engrossed in 'harlotry' and 'promiscuity'.[25] Burnside's evaluation is thus unconvincing because his contextualisation is already problematized by his biased perspectives: that 'pagan' worship was 'plagued' by drunkenness and that זולל וסבא refers to such excessive consumption. The premises with which Burnside begins render the social context he establishes inaccurate.

[22] Burnside, *The Signs of Sin*, 71.
[23] Burnside, *The Signs of Sin*, 55.
[24] Burnside, *The Signs of Sin*, 55-58.
[25] Burnside, *The Signs of Sin*, 52-3, 57.

In an innovative piece of work from 1973, Herbert Brichto briefly discusses the Law of the Rebellious Son and so his interpretation is worth reviewing here.[26] Brichto's article discusses the relationships between ancestral land claims and the rituals that descendants were required to carry out in order to appease and memorialise their deceased ancestors. Brichto understands the crime of the Rebellious Son to be one of ingratitude towards his parents, constantly taking but not giving in return. In his translation, the son 'gorges and guzzles'.[27] Such behaviour does not bode well for the care that the parents should receive after their death: 'that a son who will deny his parents the death or memorial honors they require might as well be dead - or better, executed.'[28] Brichto thus suggests that the purpose of the law was to inculcate proper behaviour towards the dead, specifically deceased relatives who should be honoured and respected as the fifth commandment states (Deut 5:16).[29] This interpretation demonstrates how the severity of capital punishment requires an equally severe crime to precede it, and so Brichto has taken into account the importance of the socio-religious setting in which the law was created. However, he is still reliant on the rendering of the Hebrew as referring to excessive, uncontrolled consumption, and while he relates this to wider socio-religious norms, the starting point of interpretation is not interrogated or justified.

More recently, Carey Ellen Walsh's approach signals a gear shift in scholarship on the Rebellious Son, for she locates the law in the archaeology of wine production rather than using a text-based context for interpreting the law. Walsh envisages a case in which a family-run vineyard is being depleted by a son who consumes excessive amounts of the family's produce.[30] In doing so, the son demonstrates that he is incompetent in the labour of viticulture and therefore cannot be entrusted with the future management of the vineyard. This behaviour jeopardises the future wellbeing and stability of the household, and it is this threatening scenario to which the law responds. Walsh's interpretation of the Law of the Rebellious Son, while attempting to move beyond text-centric

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[26] Herbert Brichto, 'Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife: A Biblical Complex,' *Hebrew Union College Annual* 44 (1973), 1-54.
[27] Brichto, 'Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife', 32.
[28] Brichto, 'Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife', 32.
[29] Brichto, 'Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife', 33.
[30] Carey Ellen Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 223.

views, does not manage to re-evaluate the English rendering of the law as ‘a glutton and drunkard’. Thus, the agricultural scenario she envisages based on her archaeological and ethnographic research does not take into account the religious functions of alcohol. As such, Walsh does not escape the same reliance on the text to dictate the starting point of interpretation.

The second text-based approach, that of viewing זולל וסבא as a secondary insertion or gloss, sometimes leads to a reluctance to engage with any thorough interpretation of the phrase. Like others before him, Anselm Hagedorn views זולל וסבא as a secondary insertion or ‘gloss’ originating from Proverbs 23:21.[31] He states that a later editor inserted the phrase into the law as an explanation of the acts of the son. As Hagedorn does not see the phrase as part of the original law, no further attention is paid to its function. Instead, he focuses on the charge of being stubborn and rebellious and the resulting capital punishment. Hagedorn thus does not postulate a link between זולל וסבא and the Rebellious Son, but concludes that the ‘original’ law was created as a deterrent to parents who may fail to raise their children appropriately. What the precise behaviour of the child may have been is not of importance to Hagedorn’s theory, as he proposes that the law was only meant to coerce and threaten parents into proper childrearing and the punishment would never have been carried out.[32]

Bruno Clifton’s piece on the Law of the Rebellious Son argues that the extreme punishment of stoning in Deut 21:18-21 is best understood if the law is read as applying to the whole of Israel as Yahweh’s child, rather than an individual.[33] According to this interpretation, the law becomes a warning for the destruction of Israel as a result of disobedience towards Yahweh’s commandments: ‘Couched within legislation upholding the command to honour mother and father, the consequences of Israel’s disobedience to God’s law are prefigured.’[34] This interpretation points towards the idea that some kind of non-normative religious behaviour is in mind, but Clifton does not apply this to the Rebellious Son as an individual in socio-religious community with real anxieties about certain behaviours. Instead, the Rebellious Son is viewed as a synecdoche for Israel and Clifton at no point comments on the accusation of

[31] Hagedorn, ‘Guarding the Parents' Honour’, 103.
[32] Hagedorn, ‘Guarding the Parents' Honour’, 115.
[33] Clifton, ‘What if Israel was God's stubborn and rebellious son?’, 124.
[34] Clifton, ‘What if Israel was God's stubborn and rebellious son?’, 124.

being a זולל וסבא. Thus, Clifton does not consider the possibility that the 'extreme punishment' could be explained in its socio-religious context in which there were anxieties in the community around different modes of consumption.

While Hagedorn and Clifton have largely ignored the phrase זולל וסבא, Joseph Fleishman sees it as a 'new legal norm', and like Hagedorn views זולל וסבא as a later addition. He states that it served to limit the stoning of a Rebellious Son only, and exclusively, to a son who is 'a glutton and a drunkard'.[35] The emphasis placed on this innovative aspect of the law is developed by using comparative biblical texts about the excessive consumption of food and alcohol which, Fleishman states in loaded language, was 'deleterious to the addict and to society'.[36] The extent to which Fleishman wishes to characterise the phrase זולל וסבא as indicative of excessive consumption is evident in his English translation of Proverbs 23:20 in which he adds the words 'to excess' though there is no justification for this in the Hebrew text.[37] Again, a proper interrogation of the roles of food and alcohol has not been utilised to uncover any alternatives to understanding the crime as excessive consumption.

Elizabeth Bellefontaine also views the phrase זולל וסבא as a secondary addition to the Law of the Rebellious Son that reflected an originally independent situation to that of being 'stubborn and rebellious'.[38] She characterises the son thus:

> His excessive eating and drinking ran counter to accepted social norms; this is implied in the accusation itself. Further, these particular vices suggest that he was a non-productive, non-contributing parasite in the community. Being undisciplined and unpredictable, he would be untrustworthy in time of crises such as war.[39]

[35] Fleishman, 'Legal Innovation in Deuteronomy', 325.
[36] Fleishman, 'Legal Innovation in Deuteronomy', 324.
[37] Fleishman, 'Legal Innovation in Deuteronomy', 324.
[38] Bellefontaine, 'Deuteronomy 21: 18-21', 20.
[39] Bellefontaine, 'Deuteronomy 21: 18-21', 21.

Bellefontaine asserts that the Rebellious Son's crime was the excessive consumption of food and drink as expressed by the translation 'a glutton and a drunkard'. The additional accusations applied to the son by Bellefontaine are unfounded on the basis of the text and in relation to the fact that she does not carry out a full contextualisation of how food and drink functioned socio-religiously for the ancient Israelites and Judahites. She later refers to the Rebellious Son as an 'irreformable deviant'[40] which conflates two categories of consumption: excessive consumption and 'deviant' consumption. As shall be argued in later chapters, these two modes were likely not regarded as being one and the same in this ancient context. Despite this, Bellefontaine comes very close to suggesting a more convincing interpretation later in her piece. She notes that the sins of the Israelites in the wilderness were often related to food and drink 'as well as with direct breaking of the covenant through the worship of idols accompanied by eating and drinking'.[41] It is unfortunate that she does not further focus on the context of eating and drinking rather than the quantity of eating and drinking, which would arguably lead to a more insightful analysis.

In the light of this brisk review of scholarship, it is clear that commentators have failed to assess what the phrase זולל וסבא meant for the ancient scribes; instead scholars perpetuate the uncritical but preferred rendering of it as a reference to the excessive consumption of food and alcohol. This assertion needs to be rigorously re-evaluated in the light of an understanding of the roles food and alcohol played in the lives of the ancient Israelites and Judahites. Accordingly, I will now turn to discuss scholarship related to the diet and foodways of the ancient Israelites and Judahites.

Previous Scholarship on Diet and Foodways of Ancient Israel and Judah

A special edition of *Semeia* in 1999 was the first in a new wave of scholarship on food in the Bible which identified the lacuna of any dedicated works on food and drink. The editors noted that 'On food and drink, eating and drinking in the

[40] Bellefontaine, 'Deuteronomy 21:18-21', 22.
[41] Bellefontaine, 'Deuteronomy 21:18-21', 25.

worlds of the Bible so-called, focused works are not to be found'.[42] Following this collection of articles, Nathan MacDonald published two works relating to food in the Bible in 2008. One, titled *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?,* gave an overview of the diet of the ancient Israelites and Judahites, while the other, *Not Bread Alone: The Use of Food in the Old Testament*, looked at the way food imagery in biblical texts functions as a literary device in diverse ways.[43]

The development of studies on food in the Bible was greatly enabled by contemporary research in the archaeology of ancient Israel and Judah. Archaeological excavators began to recover, document and publish faunal and food remains more systematically, while specialists developed analyses of ancient animal husbandry techniques. In 1998 Aharon Sasson published his first article to use archaeological data and comparative ethnographic information from traditional, pre-modern villages to present the role of pastoralism in hill country sites of the intermediary Bronze and Iron Ages.[44] Subsequently, he published a series of articles based on his doctoral work and a final monograph, *Animal Husbandry in the Ancient Levant*.[45] These pieces argue that for most of the ancient population of Israel and Judah a survival subsistence strategy was utilised, in which animals were reared primarily for their lifetime products (milk, wool, traction power) rather than end of life products (meat, bones, skins).[46] Despite the wealth of knowledge provided by

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[42] Athalya Brenner and Jan Willem van Henten, 'Our Menu and What is Not on It: An Introduction' in Adele Brenner and Jan Willem van Henten eds. *Food and Drink in the Biblical Worlds*, *Semeia* 86 (1999), x.

[43] Nathan MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008); Nathan MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone: The use of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[44] Aharon Sasson, 'The Pastoral Component in the Economy of Hill Country Sites in the Intermediate Bronze and Iron Ages: Archaeo-Ethnographic Case Studies', *Tel Aviv* 25 (1998).

[45] Aharon Sasson, *Animal Husbandry in Ancient Israel* (London: Equinox, 2010).

[46] Aharon Sasson, 'Economic strategies and the role of cattle in the southern Levant in the Bronze and Iron Ages' in H. Buitenhuis, A.M. Choyke, L. Martin. L. Bartosiewicz and M. Mashkour eds. *Archaeozoology of the Near East VI. Proceedings of the Sixth International Symposium on the Archaeozoology of Southwestern Asia and Adjacent Areas*, 123 (Groningen: ARC-Publications, 2005), 208-21; Aharon Sasson, 'Animal husbandry and diet in pre-modern villages in mandatory Palestine, according to ethnographic data' in M. Maltby ed. *Integrating Zooarchaeology* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2006), 33-40; Aharon Sasson, 'Reassessing the Bronze and Iron Age economy: sheep and goat husbandry in the Southern Levant as a model case study' in A. Fantalkin and A. Yassur-Landau eds. *Bene Israel Studies in the Archaeology of Israel in the Bronze and Iron Ages, in Honour of Israel Finkelstein*, *Culture and History of the Ancient Near East* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 113-34; Aharon Sasson and H. J. Greenfield, 'The Second Revolution of Secondary Products: Do mortality profiles reflect herd management or specialized production?' in H. J. Greenfield ed. *Animal Secondary Products: Domestic Animal Exploitation in Prehistoric Europe, the Near East and the Far East* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2014), 206-28.

Sasson's research, little has been integrated into works in biblical studies, suggesting a reluctance among biblical scholars to engage with the archaeology of non-elite strategies for living and surviving in ancient Israel and Judah.

While Sasson's ethno-archaeological work on animal husbandry has been under-used, other archaeological findings have made their way into treatments on household meals. Carol Meyers' *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*, is a 2013 rewrite of her earlier landmark work *Discovering Eve* (1988), which takes into account the archaeological and anthropological advancements of the intervening twenty five years.[47] Meyers specifically draws out women's roles in the household, which includes the preparation of food based on the finds of household archaeology, though this is not the sole focus of the book. Cynthia Shafer-Elliott too has drawn on the fruits of household archaeology to compare the vessel types of urban and rural homesteads. She also analyses cooking installations such as bread ovens, which allows her to interpret biblical narratives that include cooking and food preparation scenes more rigorously. [48] Using a cognitive linguistics approach, Kurtis Peters elaborates on the issues taken up by Shafer-Elliott.[49] By contextualising word usage within the world of the word-user or scribe (rather than relying on etymology or cognate words for deciphering word meaning), Peters pinpoints specific cooking methods in biblical texts.[50]

Alcohol production is virtually side-lined in most works on food and the Bible and dedicated works on alcohol are few in number. In *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel*, Carey Ellen Walsh uses archaeological data from ancient Israel and comparative ancient southwest Asian societies to establish the agricultural context of wine in the Bible.[51] Despite the value of her work, Walsh overplays the abundance and ease of access to wine in ancient Israel and Judah and does not properly address the likelihood that beer was also brewed and consumed as a more cost-effective beverage. By contrast, Michael

[47] Carol Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).
[48] Shafer-Elliot, *Food in Ancient Judah*.
[49] Kurtis Peters, *Hebrew Lexical Semantics and Daily Life in Ancient Israel: What's Cooking in Biblical Hebrew* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
[50] Peters, *Hebrew Lexical Semantics*, 157-97.
[51] Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*.

Homan and Jennie Ebeling have led the way in demonstrating that beer was very likely consumed in ancient Israel and Judah, as it was in other ancient societies.[52] What is apparent at this stage is the lack of scholarship on food that adequately incorporates alcoholic beverages into the diet and foodways of the ancient Israelites and Judahites as substantial contributors to their calories, nutrition and indeed rituals. Numerous monographs and edited volumes have been published on the ritual nature of food in terms of feasting; however, similar treatments of alcohol have not been forthcoming. While alcohol is widely acknowledged to have been present at feasts and ritual events, the attention given to beer and wine is imbalanced compared to the greater emphasis given to food, and especially meat, in feasting contexts.

Indeed, feasting is the area of food studies that has drawn the most attention from biblical scholars, likely due to its high status and elite connotations as well as the multiplicity of examples of feasting in biblical texts. Peter Altmann's monograph concerning festive meals in Deuteronomy illustrates this approach well. He uses comparative texts describing feasts from other ancient southwest Asian peoples to contextualise their ideological function in Deuteronomy.[53] Such an approach facilitates an understanding of how certain ideological representations of feasting construct religious and political identities and affiliations in specific texts from Deuteronomy (Deut 12:13-19; 14:22-29; and 16:1-17). While analysing the feasts in these passages enables an understanding of the scribal authors' aims in utilising feasts as an ideological motif, Altmann's work is focused on the feasting events as presented in Deuteronomy which is a utopic and ideological text. Consequently, the study is less helpful for establishing historical consumption activities and their functions, elite or otherwise. Further to this study, Janling Fu and Altmann have co-edited an introductory volume on feasting which offers contributions concerning royal

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[52] Michael Homan, 'Beer, Barley and שכר in the Hebrew Bible' in R. E. Friedman and W.H. C. Propp eds. *Le David Maskil: A Birthday Tribute for David Noel Freedman* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 25-28; Jennie R. Ebeling, 'The Contribution of Archaeology to the Study of Women in Biblical Times: Two Case Studies', *Review and Expositor* 106 (2009), 383-398; Michael Homan, 'Beer Production by Throwing Bread into Water: A New Interpretation of Qoh. XI 1-2', *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002), 275-278; Jennie R. Ebeling and Michael M. Homan, 'Baking and Brewing Beer in the Israelite Household: A Study of Women's Cooking Technology' in Beth A. Nakhai ed. *The World of Women in the Ancient and Classical Near East* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 45-62.

[53] Peter Altmann, *Festive Meals in Ancient Israel: Deuteronomy's Identity Politics in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2011).

feasts, feasting, famine, and meals for the dead, for example.[54] The overall aim of the edited volume is to utilise various methodologies and inter-disciplinary approaches in order to introduce readers to an exploration of feasting in the Hebrew Bible and 'ancient near East', which demonstrates how seemingly disparate approaches to feasting might fit together. Most of the contributions to the volume are innovative and insightful additions to the study of feasts in this region though some, which are critiqued in this thesis, do not adequately interrogate previously held presuppositions. Another scholarly work that privileges high status feasting uses zooarchaeological analysis of faunal remains and ceramics from the Tel Dan sacred precinct.[55] Jonathan Greer has reconstructed feasting events that took place there in relation to social hierarchy and state change in the northern kingdom of Israel. While this illuminates our understanding of Tel Dan and its cultic and political milieu, it is limited in its contribution to wider understandings of consumption. His research focuses on cultic royal feasts, thus the political functions, and the elite roles of the king and the priests, are prioritised in his discussions. Additionally, Greer does not elaborate on consumption in non-feasting occasions or address the social impact of feasting on non-elite consumers.

In contrast to the above approaches which focus on elite or text-based constructions of feasting, Carol Meyers has addressed the function of feasts on a socio-anthropological level, specifically looking at how inter- and cross-community bonds are constructed through their performance.[56] As one of the first to take such an approach, Meyers' work is unusual in applying an anthropological lens to the foodways of ancient Israel and Judah. Her works are insightful in demonstrating the way food can construct networks of relationships, and this is something I will also build upon in this research.

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[54] Peter Altmann and Janling Fu eds. *Feasting in the Archaeology and Texts of the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns, 2014).

[55] Jonathan S. Greer, *Dinner at Dan: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sacred Feasts at Iron Age II Tel Dan and Their Significance* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

[56] Carol Meyers, 'The Function of Feasts: An Anthropological Perspective on Israelite Religious Festivals' in S. Olyan ed. *Social Theory and the Study of Israelite Religion* (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 141-68; Carol Meyers, 'Feast Days and Food Ways: Religious Dimensions of Household Life' in R. Albertz, B. A. Nakhai, and R. Schmitt eds. *Family and Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of Old Testament Studies. Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Cultural Studies* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 225–250.

More significantly, the insights of the socio-anthropology of food and theories of material agency – common in other academic disciplines - have not found their way into biblically-based studies of food and drink. Such anthropological insights, stressing the role of food and alcohol as agents helping to construct identities and status within the household, will be employed in this thesis. In addition, a focus on the ways in which humans and non-human 'things', such as animals, foodstuffs, and objects, are entangled by different dependences and dependencies will be used. This idea is particularly developed by Ian Hodder and shall be discussed later.[57] In addition, while feasting as a ritual event has been discussed by various biblical scholars, the ritual role of food and alcohol in everyday meals for non-elites has not been adequately addressed. Therefore there is a substantial gap in biblical scholarship dealing with eating and drinking in the Bible: that of food and alcohol as ritual and social agents in the household. Furthermore, there is no piece of work which distinguishes between excessive consumption and 'deviant' consumption, and which offers a thorough analysis of these terms in the context of eating and drinking practices of the time.

In the light of these lacunae in scholarship on the Law of the Rebellious Son and food in the Bible, the following research questions will be addressed in this thesis:

1) How did food and alcohol, as ritual and social agents, impact the lives of human, divine and animal members of the household in ancient Israel and Judah?

2) Given what is known about the ways in which food and alcohol socially and ritually impacted household members, what is at stake when food and drink is consumed in excessive quantities, and how might this relate to the accusation found in Deut 21:18-21?

3) Given what is known about the food and alcohol as social and ritual agents, what do episodes of consumption similar to that described in Deut 21:18-21 (what I term 'deviant' consumption) tell us about the meaning of זולל וסבא?

[57] Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

The process of answering these research questions will enable me to fulfil my previously stated aim, that is, to explore how the accusation of being a זולל וסבא should be understood in its ancient socio-religious contexts. Given that food and drink functioned as a primary component of ritual and religious life in ancient Israel and Judah, and noting the ideological and linguistic similarity between laws concerning the worship of non-Yahwistic deities (Deut 13:1-5, 6-11, 12-18; 17:1-7) and the Law of the Rebellious Son, I will argue that Deut 21:18-21 is of a piece with these legal scenarios.

1.3 Research Methods

My main sources of literature for this research are the biblical texts and a range of archaeological, ethnographical and anthropological works relating to food in its socio-cultural contexts. The biblical text cannot and should not be taken as offering a complete and accurate account of life in ancient Israel and Judah. One of reason for this caution is that we cannot accurately pin down a select text to its date of composition in order to determine its meaning. Texts invariably had multiple authors and redactors over different periods of time, reflecting a process of reinterpretation and reuse in varied contexts that cannot be dissected with historical confidence. Accordingly, they do not necessary reflect a single historical situation. Interpreting biblical texts solely on the basis of date of origin is thus not only a mistaken enterprise but also a narrow frame for fully appreciating the range of meaning a certain text may have held over time.[58] Consequently, I do not attempt to date specific texts but on the whole take the Masoretic texts as reflections of the texts that were redacted into their final form in the post-exilic period.

Deuteronomy in particular, as the text in which the Law of the Rebellious Son is situated, appears to have gone through multiple expansions and redactions.[59] The latest of these most likely took place in a post-exilic context when the need for ideological justifications for the exile, and identity formation strategies, was

[58] Stuart Weeks, 'Texts Without Contexts: The Dating of Biblical Texts', *Widmaier Verlag* (2013), 599-616.
[59] Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (London: Harvard University Press, 2007), 149.

most pressing.[60] Mario Liverani refers to the end of the drafting of biblical law, of Deuteronomistic historiography, and other aspects of Israel's history, as a 'post-exilic ideological re-elaboration'.[61] He also states that 'it was only in the time of Ezra (beginning of the fourth century) that the Law was established in the form in which it was passed down'.[62] The story of the discovery of 'a book of the law' in the temple (2 King 22: 8-13) is certainly not historical proof of the authenticity of Deuteronomy as a 7th century document.[63] Douglas Knight comments: 'it was not until late in Israelite history, in the Persian or even as late as the Hellenistic era, that there was a single corpus of "literary laws…"'[64] Meanwhile, Philip Davies suggests a 5th Century date for Deuteronomy on the basis that it 'fits the context of an immigrant population, based around a temple, in conflict with some of the indigenous population as well as with Samaria, and encouraged to live and exercise their control by means of a written law, controlled by the priesthood.'[65] In addition to the insecure dating of Deuteronomy, it is also impossible to confirm that its laws were imposed successfully. Davies states that cult centralisation in Jerusalem, for example, was never recognised by Samaria or the kingdom of Israel, and cult centralisation would have 'weakened royal authority and social stability' and thus was probably never required by the king.[66] Liverani even refers to Deuteronomy's laws as 'utopic', as they were rarely put into practice and instead were a future ideal:[67] 'Israelite legislative material had…a prospective function, describing what should be done to achieve a prosperity that had not yet been achieved.'[68] Consequently, it is of the utmost importance to read biblical law, including the Law of the Rebellious Son, with an eye to the socio-religious ideology of the priestly elites in a post-exilic context.

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[60] Philip R. Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 40-44; Mario Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel*, trans. Chiara Peri and Philip R. Davies (London: Equinox, 2005), 346, 357-8.
[61] Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel,* 363-4.
[62] Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel,* 347. See also Douglas A. Knight, *Law, Power and Justice in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 28, 79.
[63] Knight, *Law, Power and Justice in Ancient Israel*, 100; Philip Davies, 'Josiah and the Law Book' in Lester Grabbe ed. *Good Kings and Bad Kings* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 68-70, 76.
[64] Knight, *Law, Power and Justice in Ancient Israel*, 52-3.
[65] Davies, 'Josiah and the Law Book', 75.
[66] Philip Davies, 'Urban Religion and Rural Religion' in F. Stavrakopoulou and J. Barton eds. *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 112.
[67] Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel,* 351.
[68] Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel,* 344.

It is well established that the accounts in the Hebrew Bible of Israel's so-called early history and establishment of the united monarchy are not history by modern standards, and instead were constructed tales for the formation of a national 'Israelite' identity.[69] The biblical texts were composed and compiled by specific minority groups: elite, male, priestly scribes who were likely significantly wealthier than the majority of the population and were uniquely privileged in having become literate through their training in the scribal tradition.[70] Scribes wrote primarily for the rich and powerful, and the interests and ideologies of the political and/or temple leadership. In addition, those with political or economic power made up less than 2% of the population and may have been granted land or other privileges by elites, such as high state officials, chief military officers, and wealthy merchants.[71] Biblical legal material should therefore be viewed as literature rather than law, as it has a political and ideological edge and must therefore be interrogated with this in mind.[72] Douglas Knight has insightfully illustrated the motivations and means for those who were responsible for the production and preservation of biblical texts:

> (1) They were literate or could cause literate persons in the society to compile and write the materials that eventually came to constitute our present text. (2) The producers of the text were knowledgeable of a wide range of the people's traditions and experiences, or they were immensely imaginative in creating a literature of such broad scope. (3) The producers had some standing in the community that enabled them to get these literary materials accepted by the community or at least to ensure preservation of the literature in the face of any initial nonacceptance or even outright opposition. (4) And finally, the social locations of those immediately responsible for the production of the biblical literature corresponded to their intentions for writing; in other words, their compositions were designed to

[69] Niels Peter Lemche, *Prelude to Israel's Past: Background and Beginnings of Israelite History and Identity*, trans. E. F. Maniscalco (Peabody, Mass.: Hendickson Publishers, 1998), 12-65; Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel*, 250-341.
[70] Douglas A. Knight, 'Whose Agony? Whose Ecstasy? The Politics of Deuteronomic Law' in D. Penchansky and P. Reddit eds. *Shall Not The Judge of All Earth Do What Is Right? Studies on the Nature of God in Tribute to James L. Crenshaw* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000),103.
[71] Knight, 'Whose Agony? Whose Ecstasy?', 101.
[72] Liverani, *Israel's History,* 342-360.

> attain certain goals economic and political in nature, and such ideological characteristics of the text may still be recoverable, at least in part.[73]

Needless to say, the biblical texts therefore cannot be relied upon for a comprehensive picture of the historical realities of ancient Israelite and Judahite peoples in any period of time. Other sources and methods must be used to recover and critique the ideologies of texts which then allow for proper interrogation and provoke new insights into the ancient Israelite and Judahite societies from which the biblical literature emerged. For example, appropriate attitudes and instructions relating to foodways portrayed in biblical texts are representative only for those who wrote and read the texts, while the larger sections of the population who were not the producers or readers of these texts may have had different, but equally significant, attitudes and norms associated with their foodways. It is these under-represented, and unrepresented, voices that require the use of alternative sources and methods to uncover what biblical scribes have obscured. In this way, the common everyday foodways of most ancient Israelites and Judahites may be revealed. In addition, the points of tension between widespread foodways and biblically prescribed foodways reveal the ideological impetus for rendering deviant in the text what was likely normative in other times or contexts.

This thesis utilises a methodology which is intentionally pluralistic in nature, and multifaceted, interdisciplinary and integrative in its approach. It is a project which seeks to reconstruct the social, economic, religious and ideological natures of food and alcohol both within and without the Hebrew Bible. While biblical texts are important for understanding how the scribes wished to utilise food in their constructions of the world, they tell us relatively little about the historical reality of food and alcohol for ordinary people. This thesis therefore moves away from ‘relying or depending slavishly on the Bible’s depictions’ and towards ‘critical socio-anthropological insights’ of Israelite and Judahite cultures.[74] The methods used in this project are archaeological, anthropological and comparative literary studies of ancient southwest Asian texts.

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[73] Knight, ‘Whose Agony? Whose Ecstasy?’, 99-100.
[74] Emmanuel Pfoh, ‘Introduction’ in E. Pfoh ed. *Anthropology and the Bible Revisited* (Piscataway, NJ.: Gorgias, 2010), 3-9.

In the recent new wave of scholarship which focuses on the Iron Age household there is often a call to action for the need of a paradigm shift in so-called biblical archaeology; away from 'macro' issues pertaining to politics and economics or sites with 'biblical prestige', and towards the 'micro' in order to produce a 'bottom-up' perspective of ancient Israelite or Judahite cultures.[75] Because of the work of such scholars it would seem that we are now in a new era in which the household is seen as a vital, if not primary, part of understanding Israelite and Judahite cultures. Archaeological projects and the analyses of their reported data now more frequently address 'how' structures, installations and other material remains were used, and by whom, rather than looking to see simply 'what' high-status structure or event was there. This project is therefore indebted to those previous studies which have utilised this information to create a picture of 'everyday' life, a sphere of Israelite and Judahite cultures that is frequently absent from biblical texts.

The material remains of interest to this project include floral and faunal remains, cooking installations and vessels, fermentation installations and vessels, storage installations, ritual objects associated with the household, food remains and vessels in mortuary contexts, Egyptian tomb art depicting brewing and viticulture activities and ostraca or other inscriptions relating to food and agriculture. Remains of carbonised grains and seeds as well as fish and animal bones can tell us what foods were being processed in a given area. Large amounts of grains may indicate food storage, and faunal remains provide information about herding strategies by identifying breeds and the age at slaughter of individual herd members. The state of recovered faunal bones may also indicate whether the animal was used for traction or if the animal suffered from disease or malnourishment. Fish bones may indicate the presence of fish in the diet which is particularly interesting if the site is a significant distance from

[75] For example Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 27-31; Carol Meyers, 'Material Remain and Social Relations: Women's Culture in Agrarian Household of the Iron Age' in William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin eds. *Symbiosis, Symbolism and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel and their Neighbours from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palestina* (Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 2003), 427-8; Asaaf Yasur-Landau, J. R. Ebeling and L. B. Mazow, 'Introduction' in A. Yasur-Landau, J. R. Ebeling and L. B. Mazow eds. *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 1-3; Shafer-Elliot, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 2; Jennie R. Ebeling, *Women's Lives in Biblical Times*, (London: T & T Clark, 2010), 6-7.

bodies of water as it suggests preservation methods such as smoking or salting were used. Cooking installations and vessels such as ovens and different forms of cooking pot or serving dishes can indicate areas in a household that were used for preparation, consumption or both. Differing cooking pot types may also identify the inhabitants as being more or less wealthy than other comparative sites.

Installations and objects associated with the production of alcohol, such as wine presses and fermentation stoppers can indicate what kinds of alcohol were being consumed, from which certain consumer identities can be distinguished. Ritual objects in the home such as small offering stands or so called 'cult corners' are helpful in illuminating the ritual nature of the household especially in relation to meals and food preparation. Similarly, mortuary contexts containing food remains or vessels illuminate the use of food in rituals surrounding the recently deceased and/or venerated ancestors. Used carefully, comparative tomb art can also be a useful source of data which illustrates how certain activities associated with brewing, a particularly under-emphasised aspect of Israelite diet, were conducted and by whom. Certain texts found on tablets or ostraca are also useful in providing insight into agricultural practices and the distribution of high value items such as wine and olive oil.

Archaeological information comes with its own methodological difficulties and caveats. One of these is the issue of interpretation by archaeologists on site, any interpretations made about whether the locus currently under excavation is a 'fill' or a 'floor', for example, controls what excavation and recovery methods are used.[76] Thus, before a biblical scholar comes to the archaeological report a large amount of interpretation has already occurred, and interpretative approaches or theories vary from archaeologist to archaeologist.[77] The methods used on an archaeological excavation for collecting remains also vary from site to site. Excavators at some sites, while sieving dirt to find small remains such as bones and coins, may not carry out flotation which can reveal smaller remains like seeds and small fish bones. Some digs may not sieve at all, or use a mesh

[76] Ian Hodder, *The Archaeological Process: An Introduction* (Malden, Mss.: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 66-69; Lester L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How do We Know It?* (London: T &T Clark, 2007), 7.
[77] Hodder, *The Archaeological Process,* 20-29.

size that misses objects smaller than 50mm, 'so whether an object in the ground has any chance of becoming an "archaeological object" depends on the perspectives and methods of the recovery process.'[78] Such methods are particularly pertinent in this research for the recovery of fruit and vegetable remains – after all, seeds are often so small that they are missed and thus there is not much archaeological evidence on which to base conclusions about the consumption of these items. Some animal bones in certain soil conditions deteriorate over time and so identification of the specimen's breed or age may be difficult if not impossible.[79] While it has to be taken into consideration that archaeology does not provide a complete set of data, the information that would be otherwise unknown is too valuable to be ignored. Therefore, when used in combination with other sources, as in this research, it nonetheless remains a rich and informative avenue to pursue towards understanding diet and associated foodways. As biblical texts are also incomplete sets of data, these two disciplines stand in 'dialectical tension' with each other.[80] Other fields can provide more contextual information however, which helps to mitigate some gaps. In particular, anthropology is one of the most useful fields for contextualising and understanding archaeological remains.

Ethnography, a subfield of socio-cultural anthropology, can provide data about living cultures that may aid in the theorising of aspects of cultures that no longer exist. Ethnoarchaeology is therefore valuable in the endeavour to understand the foodways and associated socio-religious values and roles of the ancient Israelites and Judahites. Ethnoarchaeology works on the basis of comparative analogy; cultures must be similar enough in important aspects for insights to be drawn from one observable culture and used to interpret the unobservable culture. These aspects include 'cultural organization, environmental setting,

[78] Hodder, *The Archaeological Process,* 15-16.
[79] In particular, distinguishing between sheep and goat bones is notoriously difficult and methods are continually being developed and improved Lenny Salvagno and Umberto Albarella, 'A Morphometric System to Distinguish Sheep and Goat Postcranial Bones', *PloS ONE* 12 (2017), 1-2. See also Melinda A. Zeder and Heather A. Lapham, 'Assessing the Reliability of Criteria used to Identify Postcranial Bones in Sheep, Ovis, and Goats, Capra', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 37 (2010), 2887-2905; Mike Buckley, et al., 'Distinguishing Between Archaeological Sheep and Goat Bones using a Single Collagen Peptide', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 37 (2010), 13-20.
[80] Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine,* 8.

subsistence strategy, and technology'.[81] When these points of comparison are similar enough between a living culture and an ancient culture, analogical reasoning can be carefully carried out. One ethnographic approach, known as the direct historical approach, draws analogies between modern cultures now residing in the same locations as the ancient culture being studied.[82] This approach is utilised when Palestinian Bedouin shepherding practices are compared with ancient Israelite and Judahite pastoralism for example, or in Holladay's use of modern pastoral houses in Iran to draw conclusions about Iron Age four room houses.[83] It should be noted, however, that this approach must not fall into 'othering' or 'orientalising' language as has been critiqued in regard to William Dever's comparison of ancient Israelite villages with '*primitive* Arab villages in the Hebron hills' in the twentieth century.[84]

Some scholars have argued that analogical comparison is too subjective as no two cultures or societies are exactly alike, while others have suggested that all archaeological interpretation is analogical.[85] Ian Hodder has highlighted the need to incorporate context, including social context, when using analogy for interpretation.[86] Thus, it is possible to draw certain comparisons between two cultures that are more reliable than other comparisons would be.[87] When used sensitively and critically, ethnographic data can 'provide a legitimate and invaluable resource for understanding the material remains of an ancient society and for interpreting the behavioural correlates of those remains.'[88] One

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[81] Charles E. Carter, 'Ethnoarchaeology' in *Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 280-1.
[82] Ian Hodder, *The Present Past: An Introduction to Anthropology for Archaeologists* (London: B. T. Batsford Limited, 1982), 18.
[83] Aharon Sasson, 'Animal Husbandry and Diet in Pre-Modern Villages in Mandatory Palestine, According to Ethnographic Data' in Mark Maltby ed. *Integrating Zooarchaeology* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2006), 33-40; John S. Holladay, Jr. '"Home Economics 1407" and The Israelite Family And Their Neighbors: An Anthropological/ Archaeological Exploration' in Patricia Dutcher-Walls ed. *The Family in Life and in Death: The Family in Ancient Israel* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 61-88.
[84] Francesca Stavrakopoulou, '"Popular" Religion and "Official" Religion: Practice, Perception, Portrayal', in Francesca Stavrakopoulou and John Barton eds. *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 44. Citing William Dever, *Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 18-19. Emphasis added.
[85] For an overview of these issues see Carter, 'Ethnoarchaeology'; Richard A. Gould and Patty J. Watson, 'A Dialogue on the Meaning and Use of Analogy in Ethnoarchaeological Reasoning', *Journal of Archaeological Anthropology* 1 (1982), 355-81.
[86] Hodder, *The Present Past*, 158.
[87] See the example given in Hodder, *The Present Past*, 26
[88] Meyers, Rediscovering Eve, 34.

of the ways Hodder suggests such analogues can 'avoid the charge of unreliability and anti-science' is not only by understanding the functional and social context of points of analogy being utilised, but also increasing the number and range of points of comparison between then and now.[89] Ethnographic studies may be helpful by purposefully focusing on certain features or segments of society. Certain focal points, rather than the totality of a culture, can 'display how cultural practices… are experiences at a particular time and place by interacting individuals.'[90] Thus, such insights into the roles and values food and alcohol may have had for the ancient Israelites and Judahites are otherwise unattainable, and therefore are worth taking into consideration.

Where ethnographic data are incorporated into my thesis I will provide an overview of the source culture and highlight the analogical points of comparison to ancient Israel and Judah. Many of the ethnographic examples used here are taken from Kenyan cultures which follow agricultural and pastoral subsistence strategies similar to the ancient Israelites and Judahites which are particularly useful when understanding food and alcohol production. However, specific studies on food in traditional cultures - such as David Sutton's work on the role of food in the construction of memory on the traditional Greek island Kalymnos - may not have such similar analogues to ancient Israel and Judah, but are instructive in understanding the ways in which food relates to concepts of memory and identity as expressed in literary compositions.[91] In this sense some ethnographic data may be seen as case studies for the social roles of food, which means insights from them could be used as lenses for interpreting texts, while not making a direct, historical comparison or analogy between the two cultures. Louise Lawrence states that 'as long as one reads comparatively, with humility, in order to cast fresh light on, rather than dictate or presume to wholly understand patterns, hazards can be ameliorated to some degree.'[92] This approach is pertinent because utilising anthropology and ethnography in readings of biblical texts at least allows for previous presumptions to be

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[89] Hodder, *The Present Past*, 23.
[90] Norman. Denzin, *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century* (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 1997), 247.
[91] David Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).
[92] Louise J. Lawrence, *Reading with Anthropology: Exhibiting Aspects of New Testament Religion* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2005), 15.

destabilised and in so doing allows for the possibility of 'fresh light' to illuminate other avenues for understanding biblical texts and associated historical realities.

Another method arising from the field of anthropology and on which this thesis draws is ritual theory - in particular, theories of sacrifice for ancient Israelite and Judahite cultures. In looking at food, and its associated processing and consumption as ritual, social agents, it is important to recognise the role sacrifice likely had in most cases of domestic consumption, whether of meat or non-meat items like grain, bread, oil and alcohol. Work on vegetal sacrifice has been instigated by the anthropologist of religion Kathryn McClymond, while illuminating studies on the meaning of sacrifice have come from the work of Jonathan Z. Smith and Nancy Jay.[93] Theories which address material culture as agents are also introduced and utilised in relation to foodstuffs in this research, particularly those of Ian Hodder, Bruno Latour, and Alfred Gell.[94]

In addition, this thesis utilises the work of anthropologists such as Michael Dietler, which is imperative for understanding the roles and functions of food and alcohol on both macro and micro levels. Dietler's work is based on ethnographic research which understands food and alcohol to be constructors of identity through their production and consumption.[95] In this way, consumables can be considered to be social agents. He argues that food and drink are a special kind of material culture in that they are products specifically made to be destroyed and transformed through ingestion in the body; they are embodied material culture.[96] The biological need to consume food regularly, and thus its daily production and preparation, structures activity and maintains

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[93] Kathryn McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008); Jonathan Z. Smith, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Nancy Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[94] Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012); Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

[95] Michael Dietler, 'Culinary Encounters: Food, Identity, and Colonialisma' in Kathryn C. Twiss ed. *The Archaeology of Food and Identity* (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois Press, 2006), 222.

[96] Michael Dietler, 'Theorising the Feast: Rituals of Consumption, Commensal Politics and Power in African Contexts' in M. Dietler and B. Hayden eds. *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food Politics and Power* (London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 72.

roles and status within entanglements of the household or wider community. Alcohol is also viewed this way, but in addition it causes psychoactive changes in the consumer. Along with food, alcohol can be viewed as an especially powerful social and ritual agent according to Dietler and Herbich.[97] There are also particularly helpful anthropological works that have explored the connections and relationships between food and memory formation: David Sutton, as mentioned earlier, has researched traditional Greek communities, and Jon Holtzman has researched the Samburu cultures of Northern Kenya in this respect.[98]

Anthropological insights then, are utilised as a lens in the exploration of ancient foodways because they provide insight into socio-religious ways of living that are inaccessible from the biblical text alone and the historical-critical framework traditionally used in biblical studies. I am not suggesting that this project blindly applies anthropological theories to data uncovered from texts and material remains; rather they are used here as helpful lenses to shift, or even destabilise, conventional perspectives. At the same time, I recognise that I must be hypervigilant in not forcing information into pre-existing frameworks or binary structures. After all, one must be sensitive to individual diversity within and between cultures. Universal theories which claim to establish 'origins' or cultural phenomena should be regarded with caution and thus are not utilised in this project. Instead, anthropological theories are most useful when they are interrogated and assessed alongside biblical texts and other data in the pursuit of new possibilities for interpretation and understanding. Used in combination, these methods push and pull against each other, and they interrogate and question each other to throw up new insights and reassess assumptions.

Ancient southwest Asian texts, including those from Ugarit, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, are used in this project in a number of ways. In some cases they may be used comparatively with biblical texts to understand how ancient Israelites and

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[97] Michael Dietler and Ingrid Herbich, 'Liquid Material Culture: Following the Flow of Beer among the Luo of Kenya' in H. Wotzka ed. *Grundlegungen: Beiträge zur europäischen und afrikanischen Archäologie für Manfred K.H. Eggert* (Tübingen: Francke, 2006), 398.
[98] Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts*; Jon Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes: Memory, Ambivalence, and the Politics of Eating in Samburu, Northern Kenya* (London: University of California Press, 2009).

Judahites may have conceived of and communicated with deities such as El, Baal, Ishtar, and the divine dead, which are views often obscured in the Yahweh-centric ideological texts of the Hebrew Bible.[99] As Israelite religion likely emerged out of a broader Syro-Canaanite context, Ugarit in particular is an insightful source of such texts due to the similarities of Ugaritic culture with what is known about the Canaanites.[100] Multiple texts from other cultures, particularly Mesopotamia, concern the distribution of food and alcohol, or the use of food and alcohol in rituals and as wages, which allows us to understand both the ubiquity, and the economic and ritual roles, of certain foodstuffs.[101] Such texts are useful for the contrasts and similarities between them and biblical texts. This diversity of comparative texts again serves to interrogate the ideologies of biblical texts and question previously held assumptions.

Overall, this thesis adopts a multi-disciplinary approach, and in so doing brings greater scrutiny to the biblical text and also ameliorates the risk that stems from using a single method. Using a variety of methods means that they can corroborate or question one another and simultaneously reduce the privilege that has been gifted to the biblical texts in previous traditional scholarship. What this approach aims for is a textured and nuanced analysis of both the foodways of the ancient Israelites and Judahites as well as the texts that portray a particular scribal elite viewpoint in regard to consumption.

Having set the scene for this research project, and established my research context, questions and methods, I shall now move onto the first major part of the thesis. There I will more elaborately explain how food and alcohol, as material culture in an ancient Israelite and Judahite context, cannot be divorced from ritual and religious life. I will also discuss how such items should be figured

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[99] As discussed in, for example: Ann Jeffers, 'Divination by Dreams in Ugaritic Literature and in the Old Testament', *Irish Biblical Studies* 12 (1990), 167-83; Baruch A. Levine and Jean-Michel de Tarragon, 'Dead Kings and Rephaim: The Patrons of the Ugaritic Dynasty', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104 (1984), 649-659; John L. McLaughlin, *The Marzēaḥ in the Prophetic Literature: References and Allusions in Light of the Extra-Biblical Evidence (*Leiden: Brill, 2001).

[100] Herbert Niehr, 'The rise of YHWH in Judahite and Israelite religion' in D. Edelman ed. *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms* (Kampen: Kok Pharos 1995), 45-72; Herbert Niehr, '"Israelite" Religion and "Canaanite" Religion' in Francesca Stavrakopoulou and John Barton eds. *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 23-36.

[101] As discussed in Jean Bottéro, *The Oldest Cuisine in the World: Cooking in Mesopotamia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

as social agents by addressing this approach in the work of select anthropologists and social theorists. This will set the scene for the subsequent chapter (chapter 3) which will focus on alcohol and drinking practices.

Chapter Two: Food, Agency and Social Entanglements in Ancient Israel and Judah

2.1 Overview

The diet and cooking practices of people in ancient Israel and Judah have been interrogated in the studies discussed above. This chapter goes beyond the description of the 'what' and moves towards the 'how' by drawing on theories of 'entanglement', which seek to articulate the way in which humans and 'things' are bound up with each other in complex, networked dependencies.[102] Such an approach shifts the view from anthropocentrism to broader constructs of materiality in order to see how 'things' influence and impact sociality. Applying this method to food in particular allows us to see how interconnected and reliant humans were in relation to not only other humans but also their animals, deities, and the environment around them. When these mutual dependencies are brought to the fore, the social agency of food is also visible, which has serious implications for how we view episodes of consumption in biblical texts. After all, food is not merely a passive tool of human use. It is culturally-freighted: it has an ability to construct and maintain identities and statuses, it conveys allegiance and social boundaries, it can be used to coerce and conform.[103] Food is thus inherently social and, in the innately religious world of the ancient Israelites and Judahites, this includes its role in the fostering and maintenance of social relationships with divine beings. Food and alcohol are regular, perhaps even necessary, partners in ritual communication and acknowledgement of deities and venerated ancestors. Understanding this agent-based, ritual role of food is imperative for our understanding of the crime of the Rebellious Son. His misuse of food must be contextualised and set against the 'normative' and socially acceptable use of food.

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[102] Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 87, 96, 103-4.
[103] Christine Hastorf, *The Social Archaeology of Food: Thinking about Eating from Prehistory to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1-3, 7-8.

2.2 The Ritual Nature of Food

In the modern West, religious or ritual acts are seen as inherently different from other aspects of life, which is seen to be 'secular'. This understanding of our world may influence the way in which scholars of ancient cultures interpret data. Archaeologist Liora Kolska Horwitz, for example, asserts the following: 'The identification of sacred activities from animal remains entails the search for a diagnostic or characteristic pattern, one which differs from that found in domestic or secular contexts and which can be used to denote sacred activities.'[104] It is, however, anachronistic to think of ancient peoples as having 'secular' compartments of life, separate from their religious lives. This perception is a modern construct and should not be applied to any ancient peoples because it was likely beyond their conception of the world. On these issues it is worth quoting Roderick Campbell at length:

> The issue lies in the pernicious intellectualist reification of 'religion' as a unique and independent sphere of practice and especially belief. Though scholars of ancient societies frequently note that, in the societies they study, religion was inseparable from politics, daily life and so on, it is nonetheless difficult for post-enlightenment Western academics to take home the point powerfully made in Asad (1993) that 'religion' has come to denote little more than a perspective in the modern West…Practices of ritual killing and offering were (as are all practices) embedded in intertwined ways of knowing and being in the world. In other words 'religion' (to the extent that this is even a locally meaningful category) is neither thought of nor practiced as a separate compartment of social life in most times and places. It is not just (or even mainly) about beliefs, and the same is true for putatively 'religious' practices such as 'sacrifice'.[105]

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[104] Liora Kolska Horwitz, 'The Contribution of Archaeozoology to the Identification of Ritual Sites' in Scott Pike and Seymour Gitin, eds. *The Practical Impact of Science on Near Eastern and Aegean Archaeology* (London: Archetype, 2000), 63.

[105] Roderick Campbell, 'On Sacrifice: An Archaeology of Shang Sacrifice' in Anne M. Porter, Glenn M Schwarts, Roderick Campbell, Jill A. Weber and Elizabeth Carter, eds. *Sacred Killing: The Archaeology of Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lakes: Eisenbrauns, 2012),

This statement illuminates for us the idea that no aspect of ancient life was secular; every act was embedded in the Israelite/Judahite way of 'being in the world', which necessarily was a world of gods, goddesses, deceased ancestors and probably other spirits and demons as well. It is perhaps illustrative that cult areas or places are found in a range of contexts in Iron Age archaeological sites across Israel and Judah, including in the home, at work or produce related sites, in city gates, in public buildings, palaces and outdoor locations.[106] The existence of such cult places in all compartments of life demonstrates that the 'religious' was inseparable from what we might think of as broader daily life. Living in ancient Israel and Judah was living a 'religious' life. This issue is pertinent not only to biblical scholars but also archaeologists working on other ancient cultures: 'just as anthropologists have become aware that in most cases it is impossible to disentangle religion from other aspects of human culture, archaeologists cannot separate the study of religion from the examination of other socio-cultural phenomena and processes.'[107] Such phenomena and processes are inclusive of food and alcohol production and consumption.

As will be demonstrated throughout this chapter, divine beings were 'entangled' in the household with its members in various ways but particularly in their roles as providers of fertility.[108] This worldview thus imbues all food produced, stored, and consumed with a nature that is intertwined with the divine. On this issue Carol Meyers comments:

> …the very act of consuming within the household foodstuffs produced by household members on household land using

306-7 citing Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1993). See also Marc Verhoeven, 'The Many Dimensions of Ritual' in Timothy Insoll, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 124.

[106] See Rüdiger Schmitt, 'A Typology of Iron Age Cult Places' in A. Rainer, B. A. Nakhai, S. M. Olyan, R. Schmitt, eds. *Family and Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of Old Testament Studies, Archaeology, Epigraphy and Cultural Studies* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 267-81.

[107] Craig S. Bardsley, 'Cognitive and Cultural Evolutionary Perspectives On Religion: A Socio-Communicative Approach To The Archaeology Of The Mesaran Tholos Tombs' in Timothy Insoll ed. *Belief in the Past: The Proceedings of the 2002 Manchester Conference on Archaeology and Religion*, British Archaeological Reports International Series, Vol. 1212 (2004), 17.

[108] Carol Meyers, 'Feast Days and Food Ways: Religious Dimensions of Household Life' in Rainer, et. al. *Family and Household Religion,* 242; Brian Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 291.

> household implements solidifies the connection of the human and material components of a household. Even the simplest meal embodies the relationship of the occupants of a household with their ancestors as well as with the patrimonial land that sustains them…it also engages religion in that the deity (or deities) is understood to be the ultimate source of the conditions necessary for the growth of both animal and vegetable products.[109]

All food preparation and consumption was thus embedded in this 'being in the world' amongst the sustaining and nourishing divine beings.[110] In excavations, artefacts likely to be ritual objects, such as incense stands or figurines, are often found near fire places and other food preparation installations such as ovens.[111] They are frequently light and portable ritual objects which allowed them to be rearranged at will depending on the occasion, thus rendering them spatially variable in their uses in multiple rooms in association with a variety of other objects. [112] The ritual objects themselves were an imbedded and fluid part of the house which could fulfil many functions, showing that the 'religious' or 'ritual' acts of daily life were not compartmentalised. Effectively, the household was always a type of sacred space.[113] This view is further emphasised by the fact that so-called 'ritual objects' are hard to identify and define, and thus perhaps all material culture should be interpreted within a religious framework:

> We need to approach religion as a possible component underlying all material culture use and meaning – not only as a term applied to 'ritual objects'. We need to recognise the potentially embedded nature of religion as a key building block, if not sometimes the key building block of identity. For as has been stressed such an approach allows religion to be seen as part of a holistic package possibly structuring all aspects of life, with

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[109] Meyers, 'Feast Days,' 242.
[110] See above quotation from Roderick Campbell.
[111] Schmitt, 'A Typology of Iron Age Cult Places,' 268.
[112] Schmitt, 'A Typology of Iron Age Cult Places,' 268.
[113] *Contra* Beth A. Nakhai who comments: 'Each kind of religious act transformed the house, or some part of it, into sacred space. At the same time, given the many other domestic tasks taking place in and around the house and housing compound, this sacralization must be seen as temporal, meaning that space, like people, "multitasked."' 'The Household as Sacred Space', in Rainer, Nakhai, Olyan, Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion,* 56. Nakhai is reading modern Western understandings of 'religious' acts into the past, seeing them as separate rather than embedded in an inherently religious world.

> 'religious' material culture being seen as a very ambiguous category which is very difficult to define.[114]

Exactly how and in what ways deities were involved in food production and consumption will be discussed below. The point being made here, however, is that activities surrounding food and drink cannot be divorced from their inherently 'religious' nature. This nature, as we shall see, is also inextricably linked with the sociality of consumers in ancient Israel and Judah, and it is for this reason that understanding 'right' food usage is imperative to a more nuanced comprehension of the Law of the Rebellious Son.

2.3 Food and Alcohol as Social Agents

Until recently, agency tended to be understood to infer intentionality. In this sense, something can only be attributed with agency, and thus have an effect or impact or something else, if it intended to cause that effect. This interpretation therefore limited agency to being attributable only to humans and certain animals. Such an approach has seen a reassessment in recent scholarship, particularly in disciplines associated with the study of materiality, so that agency has now come to infer impact on social action, even if direct or sentient intentionality is not apparent in the agent.[115] This new understanding has emerged from Actor Network Theory (ANT) in which objects are included as actors which structure social relationships.[116] Indeed, the focus of such an approach is on relationality, transformation and transition and the way in which things link in complex ways beyond themselves.[117] For Bruno Latour, even though objects do not have intentionality, things still have impact and effect beyond themselves and thus are agents by delegating for humans:

> In addition to 'determining' and serving as a 'backdrop for human action', things might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit,

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[114] Timothy Insoll, 'Are Archaeologists Afraid Of Gods? Some Thoughts on Archaeology and Religion' in Insoll ed., *Belief in the Past*, 5.
[115] For example, Marcia-Anne Dobres and John E. Robb, eds. *Agency in Archaeology* (London: Routledge, 2000).
[116] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 70-82.
[117] John Law, 'Notes on the Theory of the Actor-Network: Ordering, Strategy, and Heterogeneity', *Systems Practice* 5 (1992), 383-4.

> suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on. ANT is not the empty claim that objects do things 'instead' of human actors: it simply says that no science of the social can even begin if the question of who and what participates in the action is not first of all thoroughly explored, even though it might mean letting elements in which, for lack of a better term, we would call non-humans.[118]

Things are thus agents or actors because they are interconnected beyond themselves, they extend out into material networks and create effects in those networks. Things cannot be divorced from their networks or from the effects they create in those networks. 'An actor is a patterned network of heterogeneous relations', even human actors.[119] Latour's work has been highly influential in archaeology and anthropology in that it has sparked ways of thinking about the past that are less 'human-centric'. This shift has been termed the 'ontological turn'.[120]

In Alfred Gell's work on the agency of art, objects (specifically here art objects) are seen as 'secondary' agents in the sense that they distribute the agency of 'primary' agents which have intentionality (humans).[121] Gell does not believe that this hierarchical nature of different agencies renders objects as agents 'only in a manner of speaking' but just that the nature of the agency is slightly different. For Gell, agency is always necessarily observed in the material word after the fact; it is not observable prior to the exertion of some cause in the world and thus agency can only ever be thought of, and thus attributed, in relation to 'things'.[122] As he says, 'the origination and manifestation of agency takes place in a milieu which consists (in large part) of artefacts…agents, thus, 'are' and do not merely 'use' the artefacts which connect them to social others.'[123] Thus agency of 'primary' agents is manifested in the form of objects

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[118] Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 72.
[119] Law, 'Notes on the Theory of the Actor-Network', 382-384.
[120] For an overview see Benjamin Alberti, 'Archaeologies of ontology'*, Annual review of anthropology* 45 (2016), 163-179; Christina T. Halperin, 'Anthropological Archaeology in 2016: Cooperation and Collaborations in Archaeological Research and Practice', *American Anthropologist* 119 (2017), 284-297.
[121] Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 20.
[122] Gell, *Art and Agency*, 20.
[123] Gell, *Art and Agency*, 21.

which can thus be considered agents themselves as they too impact and affect the social relations around them. In fact, it is this relationality and context within sociality that is imperative to conceiving of agency in the first place, as agency cannot exist without other 'things' to impact or act in relation to.[124] Gell illustrates this in his theory by the use of the label of 'patient' in relation to 'agent': the patient is the thing that is affected or impacted by the agent, and an agent cannot exist without the thing it exerts agency over.[125] Thus we can see that agency is inherently social and relational.

Gell's theory, however, mainly refers to things which are manufactured, art usually being something brought into being rather than 'naturally' occurring.[126] In this sense then the creator, recipient, and artefact (or what he terms the 'index') are relationally involved with each other:

> The public, or 'recipients' of a work of art (index) are, according to the anthropological theory of art, in a social relationship with the index, either as 'patients' (in that the index causally affects them in some way) or as 'agents' in that, but for them, this index would not have come into existence (they have caused it).[127]

We may think of food in a similar way: the cook or baker causes the food ('index') to come into being, the food is made for the consumer (recipient), and the consumer is affected by the food consumed. Without the consumer there would be no need for the cook to create the food in the first place and without the cook the food could not come into being. Thus, food is simultaneously an agent and a patient having multiple social relationships at any one time but also is the object which creates a social relationship between the cook and the consumer. It therefore has agency.

While Gell's theory is particularly helpful in thinking about the agency of created objects, it is less useful for the conception of agency in other 'things' which are

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[124] Gell, *Art and Agency*, 22.
[125] Gell, *Art and Agency*, 22.
[126] Gell, *Art and Agency*, 23.
[127] Gell, *Art and Agency*, 24.

not necessarily created or manufactured. His theory also conceives of agency as hierarchical in a way that ANT does not.

In the work of prominent archaeologist John Robb, the agency of both humans and material things is 'inherently contextual and situated', and thus rather than an inherent quality of an individual, is instead characteristic of relationships.[128] Because the material world creates context and mediates action for and between people, and because people 'form important relations' with material objects, 'agency is fundamentally material'.[129] Human agency is traditionally viewed as a universal human ability to exert intention, but this assumes that motivations are external to the cultural context of that exertion:[130]

> …what is purposive activity from the actor's point of view can only be so because of numerous layers of collaboration and conflict with unseen structures of the material and social world, of conformity with a social reality which both defines the agents' intentions and ultimately encapsulates, absorbs or directs divergent intentions.[131]

It thus may be that the common understanding of agency as 'a zero-sum quantity associated with individual, volitional mastery' is the reason why agency has not readily been associated with material things. All action occurs within a 'field of context' in which relationship between humans and objects have been established and continue to socially reproduce. 'Material culture intervenes to structure human life through the genres, institutions, beliefs associated with them'.[132] In the context of recent mass school shootings in the USA, I find it particularly pertinent that Robb discusses the infamous statement that 'guns don't kill people' to distinguish between 'conscious agency' and 'effective agency':

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[128] John Robb, 'Beyond Agency', *World Archaeology* 42 (2010), 494.
[129] Robb, 'Beyond Agency', 494.
[130] Robb, 'Beyond Agency', 496.
[131] Robb, 'Beyond Agency', 499.
[132] John Robb, 'The extended artefact and the monumental economy: a methodology for material agency' in Elizabeth DeMarrais, Chris Gosden & Colin Renfrew eds. *Rethinking materiality: The engagement of mind with the material world* (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2004), 133.

> Do guns kill people, or do people with guns kill people? The conscious agency clearly belongs to the human, the person pulling the trigger for a specific purpose at a given moment. The effective agency, however, comes from many elements of the situation – the gun as an institution, the gun as enabling personal protection, the gun as means of expressing anger and carrying out conflict. The instrument itself changes the parameters of the situation it forms a part of.[133]

It is the relationship between the person and the gun, and the context in which this relationship is embedded – which is already mediated by material things and relations – that has the agency to effect the outcome of shooting someone. The presence of a gun impacts and affects human behaviour.

Robb applies his theory of material agency to cows in Neolithic contexts. He discusses all the ways in which a cow, as a physical animal, also had social impacts that extend out into relationships with the individuals and wider community to which the cow belonged, and he calls this the 'extended artefact'.[134] Relevant to my research, Robb mentions how cows affect social transactions revolving around care for herds and food production:

> …when they were eaten it was a festive occasion when people from many places came together, prepared large amounts of food in special ways…and created social relations outside the daily fabric of the hamlet…Hence cattle had effective agency: dealing with cattle may have enabled many kinds of social action but only at the cost of having your life structured by the needs of cattle as a cultural system.[135]

The idea that the life-structuring care for a source of food is a 'cost' bears some similarities to Hodder's theory of entanglement. Hodder, too, views relationships

[133] Robb, 'The extended artefact', 137.
[134] Robb, 'The extended artefact', 135-6.
[135] Robb, 'The extended artefact', 136.

as key to understanding the impact and agency of material culture. Entanglement is a phenomenon in which all 'things' exist in relationships of dependencies, and consequently things act due to material interactions with each other:

> …things have a primary agency, not derived from humans and not associated with intentionality. Rather, things have primary agency in that they act in the world as a result of processes of material interaction, transformation and decay. Materials and the forces that flow through them afford humans certain potentials and constraints. In these ways things are actors.[136]

To understand this notion of object agency I need to say more about Hodder's understanding of entanglement and object-human dependencies and dependences. He contends that humans depend on things in order to live, think, socialise and eat, and therefore humans are reliant on things. But, as in the phrase 'it depends', there is also a contingency to dependences in that many possibilities of reliance are available depending on the particular things.[137] Dependency, as opposed to dependence, implies constriction over time, in that humans get caught up, or entrapped, in interactions with things over time which can be limiting.[138]

This notion of dependency is well exemplified by looking at the domestication of wheat. When humans began to put greater effort into particular areas of land for growing a desirable plant such as wheat, seeds from desirable specimens were replanted in order for there to be a greater return of produce at the next time of procurement. One of the desirable traits in cereal crops would have been a reduction in natural seed dispersal, because seeds dropped by the plant prior to harvest could not then be processed by humans and thus it was more beneficial to grow plants which did not drop their own seeds. Plants could not then reproduce themselves without the input of human action because the seeds would not drop on their own and instead required harvesting and replanting by

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[136] Hodder, *Entangled*, 216.
[137] Hodder, *Entangled*, 17.
[138] Hodder, *Entangled*, 18.

farmers. Consequently, increased labour from humans was required, not only to continue replanting for the future survival of the species, but also increased energy spent on processing the grains, separating the wheat from chaff, which had become increasingly harder to extricate from one another due to the previous selective replanting.[139] Similar scenarios are evident in the domestication of sheep which required increased and more complex care, protection, feeding and culling strategies for their survival.[140] In regards to the human dependence and dependency such domestication creates, Hodder states: 'There was more than just mutual reliance (dependence). There was also an ensnaring and entrapment (dependency) as humans tried to manipulate plants and animals as they wanted them…Humans became involved in such a way that they had to work harder, becoming constrained by the dependency.'[141] Such dependencies transformed the way humans lived, forcing people to settle near their fields, 'we did not domesticate wheat. It domesticated us.'[142]

The dialectics of dependences and dependencies between humans and things are what Hodder terms 'entanglements'.[143] Things have 'vibrant' lives; they depend not only on humans, but on each other and they thus create conflicts, tensions and interactions. Looking at the way in which things are 'entangled' allows us to appreciate more fully the importance of things and their social relationships. It is in this way that Hodder sees things as having agency. Things affect humans and other things, not because they have been created by a human with intentionality, but because of the complex and ever-fluctuating entanglement of dependences.

Food specifically has been thought of and discussed as an agent in more detail in recent works.[144] Casting food as an agent is particularly apt when one considers the fact that food, as a material culture specifically meant for

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[139] Hodder, *Entangled*, 75-6.
[140] Hodder, *Entangled*, 77-9.
[141] Hodder, *Entangled*, 79.
[142] Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (London: Vintage, 2011), 91. See also James C. Scott, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 19.
[143] Hodder, *Entangled*, 89.
[144] Hastorf, *The Social Archaeology of Food;* Louise Steel and Katharina Zinn, eds. *Exploring the Materiality of Food 'Stuffs': Transformations, Symbolic Consumption and Embodiments* (London: Routledge, 2016); Rebekah Welton, 'Ritual and the Agency of Food in Ancient Israel and Judah: Food Futures in Biblical Studies', *Biblical Interpretation* 25 (2017), 609-624. See also Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 39-51.

consumption, is embodied and has effects in and on the consumer.[145] Food is transformed as it is digested, but it also transforms the consumer. This transformation is not just the physical transformation caused by the intake of nutrients and calories, or the inebriating effect of alcohol, but the social transformations and shifting of social relations implicit in acts of procuring, serving, and eating with others, whether human or divine.[146]

Hodder's theory of entanglement includes one particular example which is useful for my implementation of this approach:

> The jug takes what is poured into it, and then pours the liquid out. The water and wine come from a rock spring or from rain or from the grape growing in the earth. The pouring out can quench thirst for humans or be a libation to the gods. So the jug connects humans, gods, earth and sky. It is this 'gathering' that makes the jug a thing.[147]

Whether we 'believe' in gods today does not change the fact that for the user of the jug the act of pouring out a wine libation to divine beings connected them in some way to those beings socially and relationally. Theories of entanglement are not just limited to the earthly realm, but extend beyond, into the realm of the divine – whether the heavenly gods or underworldly entities. I intend to incorporate an acknowledgement that the environment of the ancient Israelites and Judahites, and therefore the things with which they were entangled, were dependent on divine beings. In this way, the divine beings themselves can be seen as actors in the dialectic of dependences because people will have behaved in certain ways in order to secure fertility from the deities. Additionally, in this worldview deities themselves may have 'required' certain acts of worship, particularly in the form of food, in order to maintain their status and identity. This idea will be explored below. The theory of entanglement and the agency of food will thus be used as an interpretive lens throughout this chapter, and the rest of

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[145] Michael Dietler, 'Theorising the Feast: Rituals of Consumption, Commensal Politics and Power in African Contexts', in Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden eds*., Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food Politics and Power* (London: Smithsonian Institution, 2001), 72.
[146] Michael Dietler, 'Culinary Encounters: Food, Identity, and Colonialism,' in K. C. Twiss ed., *The Archaeology of Food and Identity* (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois Press, 2006), 223.
[147] Hodder, *Entangled*, 8.

this investigation, in order to elucidate the biblical crime of the Rebellious Son. I shall now proceed to discuss the entanglement of humans, animals, deities and food in ancient Israel and Judah.

2.4 Animal Husbandry and so-called 'Secondary Products'

Animals in the ancient Israelite and Judahite household may be thought of as non-human persons who contributed to the continued maintenance and survival of the household unit. The material resources and the social value that cows, sheep and goats provided for the household was imperative to the rest of the household members. Humans depended on their animals just as animals depended on their humans.

First, a comment about terminology. The work of Andrew Sherratt in 1981 and 1983 categorised the products of animals into two types: primary and secondary.[148] The primary products were those accessible after the death of the animal such as meat, hide, bones and horns, while the secondary products were those exploited during the lifetime of the animal, seen as a 'by-product' of the process of raising an animal to be eaten. These were the milk, wool, dung and strength of the animal. This model assumes modern preferences in that animals are seen only as meat sources, which reflects the centrality of meat as a regular component of diet today in the West. There are, however, numerous problems with this distinction that have been discussed in great detail by Daniel Helmer and Jean-Dennis Vigne; they argue against Sherratt and instead suggest that milk production was one of the reasons animals were first domesticated.[149] Hunter-gatherers would not have had access to milk, but only meat from animals after the kill: 'milk procurement is beyond the reach of hunters, but is one of the main innovations in animal domestication.'[150] It makes little sense for hunters to risk spending their energy on domesticating animals

[148] Andrew Sherratt, 'Plough and Pastoralism: Aspects of the Secondary Product Revolution' in Ian Hodder, Glynn Isaac and Norman Hammond eds. *Pattern of the Past: Studies in Honour of David Clarke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 261-305; Andrew Sherratt, 'The Secondary Exploitation of Animals in the Old World', *World Archaeology* 15 (1983), 90-104.
[149] Daniel Helmer and Jean-Dennis Vigne, 'Was Milk a "Secondary Product" in the Old World Neolithisation Process? It's Role in the Domestication of Cattle, Sheep and Goats', *Anthropozoologica* 42 (2007), 9-40.
[150] Helmer and Vigne 'Was Milk a "Secondary Product"' 33.

for meat when they already knew how to obtain their meat from hunting. Milk, on the other hand, was a valuable resource that required skill and long-term herd management to produce, and so is likely to be one of the primary reasons domestication began to develop (wool, and strength for ploughing, are also desirable products that hunters would not have had much access to). A similar argument has been made in regard to the need to procure dung which would have been difficult to collect without the animals having been domesticated first and kept within a restricted area.[151] In addition to this argument, there is also the fact that within the animals' lifetime, the meat, bones, skin and horns are not the products first utilised by their owners, whereas the dung, fleece, strength and milk are. Following Helmer and Vigne, a better labelling of the types of product provided by the domestication of animals instead would be 'lifetime products' and 'final products.'[152] Both the lifetime and final products of animals in the ancient Israelite and Judahite household were necessary to the flourishing of the unit, as I shall demonstrate.

When looking at the diet of an ancient society it is important to understand the environment, both economic and physical, in which it was located. Due to the more unwieldly conditions of ancient societies, such as drought, famine, disease, carnivorous predators, blights and insect swarms, it was scarcity, as opposed to surplus, which played the dominant role.[153] An economic strategy which could provide a steady supply of food despite these threats (even in the long term) was vital to the survival of a household or wider community. Such a strategy involved reducing risks and fluctuations and increasing stability and security in the resource base in which a household was embedded and entangled. This kind of strategy is called the survival subsistence strategy – a process pertaining to Iron Age Israel and Judah that has largely been examined in the research of Aharon Sasson.[154] The strategy aims to keep the sizes of the

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[151] Brian Hesse, 'These Are Our Goats: The Origins of Herding in West Central Iran' in Juliet Clutton-Brock and Caroline Grigson eds. *Animals in Archaeology Vol. 3: Early Herders and Their Flock* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1984), 260.
[152] Helmer and Vigner 'Was Milk a "Secondary Product"', 36.
[153] Paul Halstead and John O'Shea, *Bad Year Economics: Cultural Responses to Risk and Uncertainty* (Suffolk: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 6.
[154] Aharon Sasson, *Animal Husbandry in Ancient Israel* (London: Equinox, 2010); Aharon Sasson 'Reassessing the Bronze and Iron Age Economy: Sheep and Goat Husbandry in the Southern Levant as a Model Case Study' in A. Fantalkin and A. Yasur-Landau eds. *Bene Israel: Studies in the Archaeology of Israel and the Levant during the Bronze and Iron Ages* (Leiden, Brill: 2008), 113-134.

flock, herd and land of the owner at an optimum level in order to produce what is required to ensure the household's survival, but not beyond that point.[155] The risk of trading one's stock for something 'luxurious' in order to improve the family's quality of life would not have been worthwhile if this then led to an inadequate supply of food. Therefore, it is more likely that very little surplus was ever produced if a long-term survival subsistence strategy was being followed closely. Trade between communities was likely social and reciprocal in nature and should not be seen as market economy in which profit was the aim, but rather it encouraged group survival through social obligations.[156]

2.5 Urban and Rural Meat Consumption

Before addressing what food items were available for consumption to the ancient inhabitants of Iron Age Israel and Judah it is important to establish the differences between various segments of society. When comparing the faunal remains at urban sites and rural sites across Israel and Judah, Sasson found no difference in the percentage of sub-adult faunal remains between these site types.[157] This evidence suggests that the urban sites as a whole utilised the same survival subsistence strategy as rural sites to produce lifetime products and final products of animals. However, Cynthia Shafer-Elliott's research demonstrates that the cooking and consumption activities of individual households may have differed between urban sites and rural sites.

Shafer-Elliott uses spatial analysis techniques to look at urban fortified settlements and rural farmsteads of Iron II Judah.[158] The settlements Shafer-Elliott analyses are Tel Lachish and Tel Halif, while the larger farmsteads are Khirbet er-Ras and Pisgat Ze'ev. The dwellings analysed from Lachish and Tel Halif were much smaller than the farmsteads (Khirbet er-Ras at 10.5 × 12.9 m; Pisgat Ze'ev at 10 × 8 m; Halif at 7.5 × 6.75 m; Lachish at 9 × 9 m).[159]

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[155] Timothy Ingold, *Hunters Pastoralists and Ranchers: Reindeer Economics and Their Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 134.
[156] Sasson, *Animal Husbandry in Ancient Israel*, 7-8. Cf. Carol Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 47, 56, 112, 116 – 17; Philip J. King and Lawrence Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 192-3
[157] Sasson, *Animal Husbandry,* 36-8, 42.
[158] Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Bible* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2013).
[159] Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 109.

Moreover, the farmsteads were surrounded by widespread land which was probably used for agricultural and pastoral activities from which the residents of the farmstead survived. The so-called 'four room houses' that are the typical style of domestic building in Iron Age Israel and Judah are usually much smaller in urban centres. The larger farmsteads, while maintaining the common four-room style, have further divisions within each room making the total number of areas nearly double.[160] Thus, larger numbers of people probably lived in the farmsteads. This has been imagined in terms of the nuclear family versus the extended family, the latter being required to help maintain the surrounding land and animals. Those living in the urban settlements did not have this necessity to live off the surrounding land and probably worked as 'tradesmen, artisans, or have been official employees of the monarchy, cult, or military.'[161]

Shafer-Elliott's study has taken advantage of cooking pot finds in order to draw conclusions about comparative food consumption in these two segments of Judahite society. At Tel Lachish and Tel Halif, those urban centres where dwellings were smaller and housed a smaller family unit, the most common vessels found were the hybrid pot and the traditional pot, the latter being large enough to cook pieces of meat. At the larger farmsteads, the so-called Philistine jug was more common, with some use of the slightly larger hybrid pot, but the large traditional cooking pot was not used. The Philistine jug and hybrid pot were more apt for boiling grains and lentils into a gruel as they had narrow openings and the jug could take direct heat. While both types of homes utilised bread ovens, Shafer-Elliott proposes that the extended families of the farmsteads did not eat as much meat as the urban families due to the fact that they would have relied on the animals too much for their lifetime products.[162] The nuclear families in the urban settlements likely had more access to meat by purchasing cuts. Their income probably came from the city and so meat and other items were bought in rather than produced by the family.[163] This does not mean that urban centres as a whole used a different strategy in the raising of

[160] Avraham Faust and Shlomo Bunimovitz, 'The Four Room House: Embodying Iron Age Israelite Society', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 66 (2003), 22; Avraham Faust, 'The Rural Community in Ancient Israel during Iron Age II', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 317 (2000), 17.
[161] Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 112.
[162] Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 111.
[163] Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 111.

livestock to rural farmsteads, as Sasson has shown, but it suggests that the distribution of meat within the urban area was different to that of rural sites.

Having made some general remarks about animal husbandry and the premises of the survival subsistence strategy, I shall now progress to specific animal species and their associated contributions to the household.

2.6 Sheep, Goats and Cattle: Dairy, Wool, Ploughing and Dung

Perhaps one of the clearest indications that animals were 'members' of the ancient Israelite and Judahite household is the fact that there was designated space inside the household structure for the shelter of animals.[164] We thus can think of these household animals as 'companion species' which were active, if not central, participants in household life and thus should not be relegated to 'background' characters in the lives of humans.[165] Cultural theorist Donna Haraway has drawn attention to the fact that human civilization has co-evolved with animals; there is no way to separate human development from the lives of animals.[166] In this way, humans have always been entangled with animals; we have co-evolved.

Sheep and goat bones are the most common faunal remains at archaeological sites across Israel/Palestine. While both types of animal produced milk which could be exploited by the ancient Israelites and Judahites, the milk of the sheep has a much higher fat and protein content than that of the goat.[167] Milk yields four to five times the amount of energy and protein compared to meat per unit of animal feed, it can be stored in the forms of butter, cheese and yoghurt, and

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[164] John S. Holladay, 'Four-room House' in Eric M. Meyers ed., *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Archaeology in the Near East,* Vol.2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 339; Jennie R. Ebeling, *Women's Lives in Biblical Times* (London: T & T Clark, 2010), 35; William G. Dever, *The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: Where Archaeology and the Bible Intersect* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 164.

[165] Ken Stone, *Reading the Hebrew Bible with Animal Studies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 29.

[166] Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 73.

[167] Aharon Sasson, 'Animal Husbandry and Diet In Pre-Modern Villages in Mandatory Palestine According To Ethnographic Data' in Mark Maltby ed. *Integrating Zooarchaeology* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2006), 1 (Table 1).

also provides calcium, fat, sugar and vitamin D.[168] In fact, due to the rapid speed at which fresh milk would turn sour, most milk (whether sheep or goat) would have been turned into other dairy products to prolong the life of the milk, and in addition these products contain less lactose than raw milk which makes it easier to digest for humans as lactase, the enzyme which breaks down lactose, is not produced past early childhood.[169] Butter churns were used from the Chalcolithic period in Palestine (c. 3500 BCE) and Early Dynastic (c. 2900–2350 BC) glyptic representations from Mesopotamia depict milking activities.[170] Thus it is reasonable to suggest that milking and milk processing were well-established and strategic activities in Iron Age southwest Asian contexts.

Unfortunately, however, there is a dearth of textual material that provides detailed descriptions of milking habits or dairy processing activities from ancient southwest Asia. Thus, analogies from similarly pastoral communities with comparable environmental features of a warm climate and arid land are helpful, and suitable, discussion partners for gaining insights into dairy usage in ancient southwest Asian contexts. For example, the Samburu of Northern Kenya are primarily pastoral, rearing sheep, goats and cows, for milk and meat.[171] While meat is highly valued and eaten at rare, special occasions, milk is consumed every day and is the primary source of nutrition.[172] The Samburu drink milk fresh and curdled (the latter is considered to be more filling as well as having more flavour), and milk is also processed into ghee and buttermilk.[173] The Negev Bedouin also depend primarily on pastoralism and reside in a similar general location as the ancient Israelites and Judahites, making them suitable for drawing some comparisons in regard to milk usage.[174] Such an approach of course comes with the caveat that practices carried out today do not reflect a preservation of Bronze or Iron Age economic strategies and thus Bedouin communities should not be seen as a direct representation of ancient pastoral

[168] Simon Davis, *The Archaeology of Animals*, (London: Batsford, 1987), 155.
[169] Daniel T. Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization: The Material Foundations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 144.
[170] Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, 145.
[171] Jon Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes: Memory, Ambivalence, and the Politics of Eating in Samburu, Northern Kenya* (London: University of California Press, 2009), 97-102.
[172] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 101-2.
[173] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 102.
[174] Cf. Ian Hodder, *The Present Past: An Introduction to Anthropology for Archaeologists* (London: Batsford, 1982), 18.

life.[175] Instead, when used with humility and sensitivity, ethnographic information can be illuminating for suggesting possible ways of viewing the contribution of milk-producing animals.

For the Samburu, and many pastoral cultures in southwest Asia, milk is a staple food because it is not sustainable to slaughter animals for their meat.[176] In both Negev Bedouin and Samburu contexts, milking, which is carried out twice a day, is considered a feminine activity being one of the primary roles of women in the household while men have responsibilities of herding away from the immediate household area.[177] Having been procured by the women of the household, the distribution of milk is also the right and responsibility of the women in these cultures.[178] As anthropologist Aref Abu Rabia notes, the woman 'milked these ten sheep and used the milk to feed her children, her husband and his two siblings who were living with them…the rest of the milk she processed.'[179] This processing resulted in several products which form a major food component all year round: sour milk, soft and dry cheese, yoghurt, and butter.[180]

Such processing, usually involving fermentation, was conducted in either clay pots or animal skins, as has been documented from the ethnographic work of Gloria London.[181] In traditional Cypriot cultures until the 1960s, milk was tuned into cheese by boiling the milk with a goat kid's stomach submerged in it. The natural enzymes in the kid stomach would cause instant fermentation.[182] London thus suggests that this sheds light on the biblical dietary prohibition against cooking a kid in its mother's milk (Exod 23:19; 34:26; Deut 14:21). She suggests that because the biblical statements occur in relation to seasonal

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[175] Aharon Sasson, *Animal Husbandry in Ancient Israel*, (London: Equinox, 2010), 18.
[176] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 97; Hesse, 'These Are Our Goats', 250. Avi Perevolotsky, 'To Sell or Not to Sell - A Pastoralist's Dilemma: A Lesson from the Slaughterhouse', *Human Ecology* 14 (1986), 291; Leslie H. Brown, 'The Biology of Pastoral Man as a Factor in Conservation', *Biological Conservation* 3 (1971), 96; E. F. Thomson, et. al. 'Availability of Home-Produced Wheat, Milk Products and Meat to Sheep Owning Families at the Cultivated Margin of N.W. Syrian Steppe', *Ecology of Food and Nutrition* 19 (1986), 120.
[177] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 103; Aref Abu Rabia, *The Negev Bedouin and Livestock Rearing* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), 77.
[178] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 103; Rabia, *The Negev Bedouin*, 77.
[179] Rabia, *The Negev Bedouin,* 77.
[180] Rabia, *The Negev Bedouin,* 75, 85-86. For a detailed overview of the preservation of dairy products from a range of ethnographic sources see Gloria London, *Ancient Cookware from the Levant: An Ethnoarchaeological Perspective* (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2016), 120-123.
[181] London, *Ancient Cookware from the Levant*, 120.
[182] London, *Ancient Cookware from the Levant*, 122.

festival offerings, the young goats were intended as offerings and thus the text disallows the use of their stomachs in making cheese because they were meant to be part of the tithes, or because cheese making was prohibited during the festival.[183]

Clay pots used for the fermentation of milk into other dairy products could be reused repeatedly. The lactic bacteria which caused the fermentation became embedded in the porous clay walls of jars and were not easily removed. Any milk placed into such jars, termed as having 'milk memories', would automatically ferment.[184] Consequently, meat could not be stored or cooked in dairy jars because the bacteria would cause meat to turn sour and cause illness or even death in those who consumed spoilt meat:[185]

> Separate containers for milk and meat products were part of the regular culinary habits of probably all Mediterranean and Middle Eastern populations from Persia to Cyprus. Before the ready availability of metal or glazed pots and pans, and for the sake of not spoiling food, it was normal to have different pots for meat and for dairy foods regardless of religion, ethnicity, or cultural associations. There were different pots for cooking, preparing, or storing specific foods. While yeast or bacteria embedded in jars was desirable for fermenting cheese or beer, the yeast had a highly negative impact if fresh meat was cooked in the same pot.[186]

London thus sees these widespread customs regarding separate pots for milk and meat as a possible explanation for the rabbinic restriction that stemmed from the biblical dietary prohibition discussed above:

> …the solution presented in Rabbinic literature was to interpret the biblical passage, 'You may not seethe a goat in its mother's milk,' as the need to avoid using the same clay pot to cook meat and dairy. A change in cookware fabric stemming from the introduction

[183] London, *Ancient Cookware from the Levant*, 139.
[184] London, *Ancient Cookware from the Levant*, 120.
[185] London, *Ancient Cookware from the Levant*, 138-41.
[186] London, *Ancient Cookware from the Levant*, 141.

> of an imported pan, might have led to a new interpretation of the biblical text based on a new material reality.[187]

If London's observations are correct, they offer a possible insight into the entangled foodways of the Israelite and Judahite household. Animals were agents of fermentation of their own milk because of the enzymes in their stomachs that were used to make cheese. At the same time, even in Iron Age Israel and Judah, it may have been well known that the misuse of food processing implements could have dire consequences for the household members, thus food could exert a negative agency over consumers if customary foodways were not followed.

The Samburu store their milk in containers called calabashes, and each family member has their own calabash from which they can drink fresh milk freely throughout the day – thus milk consumption is ubiquitous and yet not a part of their 'meals'.[188] If milk was consumed throughout the day in ancient Israel and Judah, rather than as a component of mealtimes, it is perhaps little wonder, as Nathan MacDonald has noted, that milk consumption is rarely mentioned in biblical texts.[189] In traditional pastoral communities, milk and its products constitute the majority part of the daily intake of calories and protein.[190] As milk could easily be converted into storable foodstuffs, we have to take seriously the major role dairy played in the ancient Israelite and Judahite diet, rather than relying on the myth of the 'Mediterranean Triad' of grain, wine and oil for the building blocks of the basic diet.[191]

Carol Meyers has suggested that women in the ancient Israelite household were the main milkers of sheep and goats.[192] If milk was indeed associated with women for ancient Israelites and Judahites, then this may also account for its

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[187] London, *Ancient Cookware from the Levant*, 141.
[188] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 158.
[189] Nathan MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008), 11.
[190] Dairy products in the Mbarara area of Uganda contribute over 70% of the daily protein intake of pastoralists. Véronique Alary, Julien Chalimbaud, and Bernard Faye, 'Multiple determinants of milk production in Africa: the example of the diversity of dairy farming systems in the Mbarara area (Uganda)', *Africa development* 32 (2007), 172. In Maasailand, pastoralists receive over 60% of their daily calories from dairy. Barbara E. Grandin, 'Wealth and pastoral dairy production: A case study from Maasailand', *Human Ecology* 16 (1988), 7.
[191] The Mediterranean triad is critiqued in the next chapter.
[192] Carol Meyers, 'The Family in Early Israel' in L. Perdue ed. *Families in Ancient Israel* (Louisville; John Knox Press, 1997), 24.

relative absence in biblical texts written by elite men. Additionally, dependence on milk as a fundamental staple food may not have been experienced by scribal authors of biblical texts who did not depend as heavily or directly on such a pastoral strategy. Sheep, goats and their milk are agents in constructing the identities of women as the primary providers of the main protein source for the household. Thus, women were entangled with their animals; the animals required the care of women and women required the milk of their sheep and goats, not just for the physiological sustenance of their families, but also as a primary source of their identities as contributing household members.

Sheep also produced wool, which was a primary raw material for the production of cloth, but goats did not. While flax could have been used in order to produce linen, this would have used up valuable agricultural land which could have been used for wheat. Additionally, flax production would also have required more human labour than required to shepherd sheep for a larger amount of wool even without taking into account the labour of processing the flax and producing the linen itself.[193] Wool was thus likely the most important material for creating textiles in ancient Israel and Judah, as it was in Mesopotamia.[194] The Sumerian agricultural calendar included a month named the month of the 'sheep-plucking shed' and texts from the Ur III dynasty (c. 2112 BCE – c. 2004 BCE) demonstrate that sheep-plucking was exclusively a female activity. In the Old Babylonian period (2000 BCE - 1600 BCE), however, sheep-shearing became a male-dominated activity. [195] Either way, roles that were divided along gendered lines served to inculcate certain identities and statuses associated with those who participated in them. Additionally, it is well-established that women were the primary processors of wool into textiles in the household.[196]

The goat is a much hardier animal than the sheep; it reproduces more quickly, is more resistant to disease, and survives much longer on much less water than sheep.[197] Sheep and goats also eat different parts of the pasture land; sheep

[193] Joy McCorriston, 'The Fibre Revolution: Textile Extensification, Alienation, and Social Stratification in Ancient Mesopotamia', *Current Anthropology* 38 (1997), 522-525.
[194] Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, 92.
[195] Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, 93.
[196] Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 133.
[197] Amiram Shkolnik 'Physiological Adaptations to the Environment: The Israeli Experience' in Y. Yom-Tov and E. Tchernov eds. *The Zoogeography of Israel: The Distribution and Abundance at a Zoogeographical Crossroad* (Dordrecht: Dr. W. Junk, 1988), 487-96; Juliet Clutton-Brock, *A Natural History of Domesticated Mammals* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), 57.

graze on the grass while goats will browse on shrubs and small trees; this means that the herder's resource base is used most effectively. If a community was keeping animals primarily for the highest quality milk and wool then one would expect a ratio of 5:1 sheep to goats in a mixed herd, but if herd security was the aim then as close to 1:1 would be expected.[198] Aharon Sasson has analysed the reported faunal remains of 70 sites across Israel/Palestine and some in Jordan. Of the 57 archaeological site reports that distinguished between sheep and goat bones amongst the caprovine remains, 76% of the sites contained up to 67% sheep bones and 33% goat bones of the total caprovine remains.[199] Due to the faster reproduction rate of goats this data indicates that the majority of these ancient sites reared a mixture of goats and sheep in order to produce the high quality milk and wool from the sheep while also maintaining a secure and stable stock of animals from the goats. Such a use of a survival subsistence strategy mitigates against food scarcity that dominated in antiquity. The Bedouin and Samburu pastoralists also both keep a mixture of sheep and goats.[200]

What is also apparent from the mortality and gender profile of the caprine bones studied by Sasson is that large numbers of juvenile males were culled, which has commonly been interpreted by archaeozoologists as evidence of meat production as a primary aim, following the work of Payne.[201] However, recent research into culling patterns and models for maintaining an adequate resource base (that is, the pasturelands and water supply) show that culling young males actually suits the survival subsistence strategy. Liora Kolska Horwitz and Patricia Smith found that poor environmental conditions and nutrition negatively effects bone metabolism and mass in female sheep.[202] If too many young males are consuming the resource base then it is necessary that they are culled in order to provide the ewes with enough food to reproduce and provide milk. Similarly, if many lambs are allowed to continue living then they would consume

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[198] Richard Redding, 'Theoretical Determinations of a Herder's Decisions: Modelling Variation in the Sheep/Goat Ratio' in Juliet Clutton-Brock and Caroline Grigson eds. *Animals in Archaeology Vol. 3: Early Herders and Their Flock* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1984), 233-9.
[199] Sasson, 'Reassessing the Bronze and Iron Age Economy,' 119.
[200] Rabia, *The Negev Bedouin,* 44, 58.
[201] Sebastian Payne, 'Kill-Off Patterns in Sheep and Goats: Mandibles from Asvan Kale', *Anatolian Studies* 23 (1973), 281-303.
[202] Liora Kolska Horwitz and Patricia Smith, 'A Radiographic Study of the Extent of Variation in Cortical Bone Thickness in Soay Sheep', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 17 (1990), 655–664.

the milk that humans hoped to exploit. This strategy has been demonstrated in a computer simulation by Roger Cribb who showed that the more sub-adult males killed the higher the production of milk, while wool production also remains high.[203] Significantly, lamb mortality rates can be quite high, meaning faunal remains may not always be a result of slaughter, but natural causes. For example, one Bedouin family lost two kids to wolves, three from over-eating, three from frost bite, and one from diarrhoea.[204] Another family had a mortality rate of 17% amongst their lambs which died from a range of illnesses including frost bite, diarrhoea, brucellosis and other diseases.[205] While meat would have been available for the ancient pastoralists, it certainly was not the primary reason for killing their animals, or there would be evidence of both males and females in the faunal remains. Females were rarely slaughtered because their ability to reproduce and create milk was the main priority of pastoralists. This strategy is visible in many ethnographic studies on pastoral communities.[206]

Unlike modern Western contexts, cattle (or oxen) were not primarily raised for their milk or meat but instead for their strength which enabled them to plough fields for the crops of wheat, barley, pulses, vineyards, and olive trees that the ancient Israelites and Judahites required. This can be discerned by assessing and analysing the bones of cattle in the archaeological record. Bones provide the age of the animal at its point of death and knowing this helps to identify its role when it was alive. If oxen remains are identified as having been juveniles when killed, they likely were slaughtered for their meat. By contrast, sites where mortality profiles of cattle are 24 months or older indicate that cattle were utilised primarily as draught animals because they needed to be fully grown in order to be strong enough to pull the plough.

Of the 70 sites across Israel/Palestine and Jordan that Sasson has analysed, only 37 of the archaeological reports provide a mortality profile for bovine bones. However, 89% of those that do provide a mortality profile show that the

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[203]Roger Cribb, 'Computer Simulation of Herding Systems as an Interpretive and Heuristic Device in the Study of Kill-Off Strategies' in Juliet Clutton-Brock and Caroline Grigson eds. *Animals in Archaeology Vol. 3: Early Herders and Their Flock* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1984), 161-70.
[204] Rabia, *The Negev Bedouin,* 111-2.
[205] Rabia, *The Negev Bedouin*, 125.
[206] Hesse, 'These Are Our Goats', 250; Perevolotsky, 'To Sell or Not to Sell' 291; Brown, 'The Biology of Pastoral Man', 96; Thomson et. al. 'Availability of Home-Produced Wheat, Milk Products and Meat', 120.

majority of the cattle died when they were mature.[207] This thus suggests that cattle were primarily utilised for their traction power. Ploughing was necessary to prepare soil for seed as well as removing weeds and conditioning the soil by preventing moisture loss. The utilisation of cattle for ploughing, usually working in a pair, increased the productivity of land by 400% from land tilled by humans alone.[208] This thus demonstrates the huge benefit of having draft animals for ploughing, a source of labour that humans were dependent upon.

Cattle required access to plenty of water and extensive pasture in the form of fodder on which to feed, so the quantity of cattle a farmer could keep was dependent on the topographic resources of the area and its climate. By looking at the archaeological record of bovine bones found at sites across Israel/Palestine and parts of Jordan, it is possible to see which geographical areas were most suited to rearing cattle. In Sasson's analysis of the reported faunal remains across 70 sites in Israel/Palestine, he examines bovine remains in relation to their occurrence at urban or rural sites as well as their geographical location. While no correlation was found between cattle bone frequency and the rural or urban nature of the site, the geographical location had a direct correlation to bovine bone frequency. In the southern Negev, the area with the lowest rainfall, cattle remains are virtually absent, while in the northern Negev and Central Hill region the average frequency was 12% of total faunal remains and the highest frequency was in the lowland regions with a frequency of 33% on average.[209] These quantities suggest that due to the need to follow a survival subsistence strategy, even urban sites (those which may be perceived as 'wealthier'), had to take their resource base into account in order that they could properly provide for the cattle. Indeed, Mesopotamian texts demonstrate 'a very close relationship between the size of the area cultivated and the fodder requirements of the plough team.'[210] Fodder for cattle thus derived from the same source as human food; cereal cultivation (discussed below), and consequently cattle were dependent on their humans for rationing

[207] Aharon Sasson, 'Economic Strategies and the Role of Cattle in the Southern Levant in the Bronze and Iron Ages' in H. Buitenhuis, A.M. Choyke, L. Martin. L. Bartosiewicz and M. Mashkour eds. *Archaeozoology of the Near East VI. Proceedings of the Sixth International Symposium on the Archaeozoology of Southwestern Asia and Adjacent Areas*, Vol. 123 (Groningen: 2005), 218.
[208] Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, 73.
[209] Sasson, 'Economic Strategies and the Role of Cattle', 215.
[210] Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, 82-3.

this to them while humans were dependent on their cattle to plough their land for cereal production. There was thus a direct correlation between the acreage required for cereal production and the quantity of cattle needed for ploughing that acreage.

It was imperative that the pastoralist maintained a stable resource base regardless of the size or wealth of that base. As animals that require significant quantities of water and fodder, it would not have been advantageous to breed large quantities of cattle for meat or milk if the land on which they lived could not support them. Therefore, only the minimum number of cattle required for ploughing were raised. What is interesting is that even at the sites where there are low frequencies of cattle bones, that is, at southern sites where this would seem to contradict the survival subsistence strategy due to low rainfall, some cattle were still raised because of the absolutely essential role that wheat and other crops played in the diets and livelihoods of the ancient Israelites and Judahites.[211]

From the above discussion, it is already becoming apparent how entangled Judahites and Israelites were with their animals and surroundings in the quest for food production. Their land and the location of that land required them to make certain decisions about animal rearing in order that they may make the most of their available resources. Humans were dependent on rainfall for sufficient water for both their cattle and the fodder on which the cattle fed. The cattle themselves were dependent on their humans for their general welfare and protection from predators in particular. Humans were dependent on the cattle for their ability to pull ploughs which enabled the planting and growing of staple crops, which I shall discuss later. Ploughing the fields with cattle and the shepherding of goats and sheep were activities performed away from the homestead, and thus were more likely to be fulfilled by men. Thus, as participators in such activities, animals can be seen as agents in the lives of the men who ploughed with them and shepherded them.[212] In this contributory act of the provision of food to the household, sheep, goats and cattle participated socially in the construction and inculcation of the identity of men as shepherds

[211] Sasson, ‘Economic Strategies and the Role of Cattle’, 215.
[212] Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 71.

and farmers.[213] This identity is also intimately bound up with the social impact of the ritual slaughter of these animals, which is discussed later.

While it may be surprising in modern Western contexts to think that animal excrement was not a 'waste' product for ancient Israelites and Judahites, in reality, it was an important and extremely versatile resource necessary for household survival. The observation that dung was used as fuel for cooking is frequently noted.[214] But this does not do justice to the entangled roles of animal dung in the household network. Dung was utilised in numerous aspects of the material culture of the household, including in the production of pottery. When dung is incorporated into clay for making pots, it increases the clay's plasticity due to its gel-forming hydrated organic polymers.[215] Dung may also have been also used in the firing of pots in kilns: given that herbivore dung has a compact but porous structure, it burns steadily and evenly, making it ideal for firing pottery.[216] In this way we can see how animals were entangled with the very vessels from which humans consumed their meals; the dung produced by household animal members became incorporated into the everyday serving and sharing of food and drink. Similarly, dung was a component ingredient of plaster used for making plaster floors and walls.[217] Thus, animals contributed to the building and maintenance of the shelters in which human and animal household members resided. Humans depended on animals for their contribution to the materiality of their very homes and their contents. While humans relied on the deities for making the lands fertile, animals were also likely known to aid in maintaining the 'fatness' of the land by fertilising plots of earth with their dung. This probably involved human activity, in that household members would collect dung and then distribute it evenly over specific areas designated for crop growing.[218]

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[213] Michael Dietler, 'Culinary Encounters: Food, Identity, and Colonialism,' in K. C. Twiss Ed. The Archaeology of Food and Identity (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois Press, 2006), 222.
[214] Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 131; Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah,* 121-2; Ebeling, *Women's Lives in Biblical Times*, 51, 55; Dever, *The Lives of Ordinary People*, 159.
[215] London, *Ancient Cookware from the Levant,* 162.
[216] Bill Sillar, 'Dung by preference: the choice of fuel as an example of how Andean pottery production is embedded within wider technical, social, and economic practices', *Archaeometry* 42 (2000), 46.
[217] Ruth Shahack-Gross, 'Household Archaeology in Israel: Looking into the Microscopic Record' in A. Yasur-Landau, J. Ebeling and L. B. Mazow eds. *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 31.
[218] Oded Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 145-6.

In traditional rural, pastoral villages, the collection of dung and the formation of 'dung cakes' is frequently the role of girls and women,[219] probably because of the proximity of the herds to the household when brought for milking. Thus, women's social lives were bound up with the flock and herds by milking their animals and collecting their dung, just as men were also socially bound up in the general care and pasturing of those flocks and herds.[220] Such daily close contact and integrated relationships of contributory activity and dependence will likely have made human household members distinctly aware of the vital roles their animals had in their continuing survival, as well as generating personal social affection for their sheep and goats.[221] Ethnographic studies focused on rural Iranian villages have also documented the central role of dung: 'Meat, milk, wool, and traction are not, they say, the most important contributions of animals to the local economy; rather, it is their dung that is essential.'[222] Such villages utilised a similar agro-pastoral lifestyle to ancient Israelites and Judahites and thus the analogue of dung use between these cultures is appropriate. Dung cakes are given to widows as great acts of generosity by ensuring their quality of life, and villagers asserted that fuel was more important than milk, being referred to as 'treasure'.[223] The high regard of dung is due to the fact that dung is necessary for the conversion of raw grain to bread, and while it is known that animal proteins in the form of milk and meat were important, these items were less critical than having the fuel to be able to bake.[224]

Indeed, in ancient Israel and Judah, dung was a highly efficient fuel source not just for warming the household, but also for creating the necessary heat to cook stews, porridges and bake bread.[225] Bread ovens, the *tannur* and *tabun*, were

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[219] Malkit Kaur and M. L. Sharma, 'Role of women in rural development', *Journal of Rural studies* 7 (1991), 12; Samiha El Katsha and Anne U. White, 'Women, water, and sanitation: household behavioral patterns in two Egyptian villages', *Water International* 14 (1989), 109; Sonalde Desai and Devaki Jain, 'Maternal employment and changes in family dynamics: The social context of women's work in rural South India', *Population and Development Review* (1994), 117; Roger Jeffery, Patricia Jeffery and Andrew Lyon, 'Taking dung-work seriously: women's work and rural development in North India', *Economic and Political Weekly* (1989), WS33.

[220] Dever, *The Lives of Ordinary People*, 172-3.

[221] See discussion in 2.7 below and Carol Kramer who comments that goats in rural Iranian villages were 'considered more intelligent creatures, and kids are often treated with great affection, being hugged and kissed'. Carol Kramer, *Village Ethnoarchaeology: Rural Iran in Archaeological Perspective* (New York: Academic Press, 1982), 45.

[222] Kramer, *Village Ethnoarchaeology*, 45-7.

[223] Kramer, *Village Ethnoarchaeology,* 47-8.

[224] Kramer, *Village Ethnoarchaeology,* 47.

[225] Shahack-Gross, 'Household Archaeology in Israel: Looking into the Microscopic Record', 34.

made from clay and constructed in a tall conical shape. The *tabun* was heated from the outside and had a flat interior platform for baking bread, while the *tannur* would heat up from fuel burnt in its base. Dough could be stuck to the inner sides of the *tannur* allowing it to bake.[226] Other methods for baking bread included heating up a griddle, made of clay or metal, and setting the bread on top to cook through.[227] Dung produced by cows, sheep and goats is entirely herbivorous, making it well suited to the above uses. Human dung, however, is qualitatively different, not possessing the fibrous structure that allows animal dung to burn so effectively.[228] Animal dung was thus one of the central lifetime products which animals, as non-human contributing household members, provided for the household's continued survival.

Having discussed the entangled dependencies of animals and humans and the ways in which all members contributed to the ongoing survival of the household, I shall now turn to address how these roles significantly impacted upon the way in which animal sacrifice was likely perceived.

2.7 Animal Sacrifice in an Entangled, Agro-Pastoral Perspective

When ancient Israelite and Judahite sacrifice is discussed by biblical scholars, two features are privileged which, to my mind, prevent an understanding of how sacrifice was utilised and viewed for most ordinary Israelites and Judahites. First, animal sacrifice is privileged to the almost total exclusion of the role of vegetal and liquid sacrifices – a point to which I will turn later.[229] Second, the portrayal of sacrifice in biblical texts is taken as being representative of how and why sacrifice was carried out for the whole of Israel and Judah. But such texts are ideological; they do not necessarily represent or describe what happened historically – or indeed why it happened.[230] As Jonathan Z. Smith argues, biblical accounts of sacrifice are inherently unsuitable for ritual studies:

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[226] These methods of baking are well established and do not need repeating in detail here. See Ebeling, *Women's Lives*, 50-51; Peters, *Hebrew Lexical Semantics*, 82-3; Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 119-25; Avitsur, 'The Way to Bread', 237-40.
[227] Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve,* 131.
[228] Sillar, 'Dung by preference', 52; Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*, 145.
[229] Kathryn McClymond has drawn attention to this phenomenon and offered a corrective in *Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008).
[230] McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence,* 35.

> We don't have ritual texts in the Bible...You cannot perform a single biblical ritual on the basis of what is given to you in the text. If you can't perform it, then by definition it is not a ritual. The biblical texts are scattered, theoretical reconstructions of what may have happened, or on the other hand, they are what whoever wrote the text wanted you to know, as opposed to what they might know. There was no speech ever in biblical ritual, no one ever says anything in biblical ritual. Either one half of what went on has been left out, or there is not a single sentence anywhere in biblical ritual.[231]

At best, biblical texts may only be used selectively and carefully - and only then as a guide as to what to look for when thinking about ritual and sacrifice.[232] This approach will be used after exploring how sacrifice might have been perceived in the agro-pastoral, entangled household; biblical texts will be used cautiously in order to elucidate what sacrifice might have meant for ordinary ancient Israelites and Judahites. But as these people did not write the biblical texts, the texts cannot be used to construct a whole or definite picture of the processes and implications of sacrifice for them.

It is well established that the search for so-called 'universal' theories of sacrifice, such as those of René Girard and Walter Burkett for example,[233] are unlikely to be able to account for every instance of sacrifice, and that sacrifice would be better understood if its unique and diverse features are studied within its own culture.[234] Thus, my discussion focuses only on the particularities of ancient

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[231] Jonathan Z. Smith, 'Discussion,' in Burton Mack and Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly eds. *Violent Origins: Walter Burkett, Rene Girard and Jonathan Z. Smith on Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 210.
[232] Smith, 'Discussion,' 210.
[233] René Girard, 'Generative Scapegoating,' in Burton Mack and Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly eds. *Violent Origins: Walter Burkett, Rene Girard and Jonathan Z. Smith on Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); Walter Burkett, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, trans. Peter Bing, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
[234] For example, Gary A. Anderson, 'Sacrifice and Sacrificial Offerings (OT)', in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary V* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 879; David Janzen, *The Social Meanings of Sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible: A Study of Four Writings* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 3.

Israelite and Judahite slaughter of animals within the entangled, rural household.

In Iron Age assemblages of faunal remains, domesticated animals, such as sheep, goats, and cattle dominate, while wild, undomesticated species such as deer and gazelle appear only occasionally.[235] From this evidence it can be inferred that while domesticated animals were the main source of meat (which was already a rarely consumed food item for the reasons discussed above), deer and gazelle could be hunted and killed for consumption. As settled people, however, game was an even less frequent source of meat as few people would have trained as hunters or spent precious time tracking game because the need to farm was a highly labour intensive and time-consuming priority.

It is unlikely that wild quadrupeds, like gazelle and deer, were ritually slaughtered (that is, sacrificed) like domesticated animals for a number of reasons. First, being extremely nervous animals and wary of humans, it would have been exceptionally difficult to capture gazelles and deer and lead them to a cultic place, such as a shrine or altar, without them becoming very skittish and attempting to escape.[236] Second, as animals that would have been hunted, the death of a wild animal would likely already have occurred by the time the (dead)

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[235] Eitan Tchernov and Amir Drori, 'Economic Patterns and Environmental Conditions at Hirbet El-Msas during the Early Iron Age' in V. Fritz and A. Kempinski eds. *Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen auf der Hirbet El-Msas [Tel Masos] 1972-1975* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz,1983), 219; Liora Kolska Horwitz, 'The Faunal Remains' in G. Edelstein, I. Milevski, and S. Aurant eds. *Villages, Terraces, and Stone Mounds: Excavations at Manahat, Jerusalem, 1987-1989* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1998), 110; Liora Kolska Horwitz, 'Animal Exploitation - Archaeozoological Analysis' Z. Gal and Y. Alexandre eds. *Horbat Rosh Zayit: An Iron Age Storage Fort and Village* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2000), 227; Simon Davis, 'The Faunal Remains' in A. Ben-Tor and Y. Portugali eds. *Tell Qiri: A Village in the Jezreel Valley* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1987), 249-50; Jonathan S. Greer, *Dinner at Dan: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sacred Feasts at Iron Age II Tel Dan and Their Significance* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 60, 81; Ilse Kohler-Rollefson, 'The Animal Bones' in C. M. Bennett and P. Bienkowski eds. *Excavations at Tawilan in Southern Jordan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 98; Liora Kolska Horwitz, 'The contribution of Archaeozoology to the identification of ritual sites' in Scott Pike and Seymour Gitin eds. *The Practical Impact of Science on Near Eastern and Aegean Archaeology* (London: Archetype, 2000), 67.

[236] Indeed, these characteristics are likely why deer and gazelle could not be domesticated like goat, sheep and cattle: '… mature males of the type of gazelle and deer common in the region are individually territorial for part of the year. The dominant males attempt to isolate oestrous females from fellow male competitors. To keep such animals in concentrated herds at the time of rut will lead to social stress and a decrease in body condition. Deer and gazelle are also extremely agile which means that very high fences are required to pen them…They are nervous and can run very fast – when constrained by high fences they can panic. It is much easier to keep sheep, goat, cattle and pig in captivity than deer or gazelle.' Hodder, *Entangled*, 77. See also Scott, *Against the Grain*, 77.

animal came into the possession of the future consumer, making sacrificial slaughter impossible for these creatures. Third, as biblical texts suggest that deer and gazelle were eaten without ritual slaughter, it can be inferred that this may reflect a general trend in ancient Israel and Judah of not viewing the gazelle and deer as sacrificial animals.[237] These wild animals were not relied upon in the ways in which cattle, sheep and goats were; domestic animals were the livelihoods of the families that owned them, as demonstrated above. While the slaughter of a domesticated animal thus implied the loss of its contributing role as a member of the household, wild animals were not viewed this way as they did not contribute to the household by providing milk, wool or traction power. Wild quadrupeds were not intimately entangled with humans in the same way as domesticates.

The importance of sacrifice as an event which acknowledges the inter-dependence pastoralists had on their animals also tells us that animal slaughter, and therefore meat consumption, was not a frequent event. When meat was available and consumed it was a joyful and much anticipated event, these events, commonly referred to as 'feasts' or 'festivals' often marked important occasions in the lives of their celebrants. Feasts can be divided into two types, those that were regular in the sense that they marked a calendrical event and those that were ad hoc, usually marking a household occasion such as an act of hospitality or lifecycle event. The occasions for such festivities have been well established elsewhere.[238] What is important is the social and ritual functions of feasts. Meyers states that 'agricultural celebrations meant a welcome relief from agrarian anxiety and…provided an opportunity for struggling households to acquire needed sustenance.'[239] Festive consumption of rare items such as meat (and perhaps wine) provided occasions for relaxing and socialising which aided in the formation and maintenance of inter-household bonds.

[237] Deut 12:15, 22; 15:22; Lev 17:13.
[238] Carol Meyers, 'Feast Days and Food Ways: Religious Dimensions of Household Life' in R. Albertz, et. al. *Family and Household Religion*, 230-235; Carol Meyers, 'The Function of Feasts: An Anthropological Perspective on Israelite Religious Festivals' in S. Olyan ed., *Social Theory and the Study of Israelite Religion* (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 147-151.
[239] Meyers, 'The Function of Feasts', 155.

Calendrical feasts which mark times of harvest such as the festival of Unleavened Bread or Passover (Exod 23:15) and the so-called Feasts of Booths and Weeks, would have been highly anticipated events in the calendar of all Israelites who participated in the daily routine of agrarian life as the anxiety of crop yields, drought, famine and disease would have been relieved by events which marked the culmination of a year of tending to their wheat, vines, barley fields and animals.[240] As Meyers notes, these feasts would have been emotionally charged by the spectacle of animal slaughter, the loss of valuable commodities but also the excitement of enjoying the rare consumption of meat.[241] One must note, however, that as the timing of such agricultural feasts was dependent on the harvest, crops themselves dictated human feasting activities. Agro-pastoralists consequently were dependent on their crops and were entangled in the lives of a few plants to which they were indebted: 'the scheduling of (many of) the feasts was related to the agricultural cycle and thus the plants may have influenced the *feasts'*.[242] Humans utilising a survival subsistence strategy did not just 'choose' to have a harvest feast, they only reacted to the circumstances presented to them by their crops. The dependence on grains' genetic clockwork may have had even wider repercussions: 'it is striking how the agricultural calendar came to determine much of public ritual life; ceremonial ploughing by priests and kings, harvest rites and celebrations, prayers and sacrifices for an abundant harvest, gods for particular grains.'[243] As such, food itself dictated when humans could revel in its consumption.

Meyers suggests that 'the household sabbath meals corresponding to Temple sacrifices should be considered feasts', and for this reason must have entailed the consumption of meat.[244] This conclusion is problematic as it is not known whether Shabbat as constructed in biblical texts accurately reflects any historical practices, and to draw conclusions about household practices from

[240] Meyers, 'The Function of Feasts', 154-5.
[241] Meyers, 'The Function of Feasts', 155-6.
[242] Salima Ikram 'Comment' in Justin Jennings, Kathleen L. Antrobus, Sam J. Atencio, Erin Glavich, Rebecca Johnson, German Loffler and Christine Luu,'"Drinking Beer in a Blissful Mood" Alcohol Production, Operational Chains, and Feasting in the Ancient World', *Current Anthropology* 46 (2005), 279.
[243] Scott, *Against the Grain,* 92.
[244] Meyers, 'Feast Days', 234. See also Meyers, 'Household Religion' in F. Stavrakopoulou and J. Barton eds. *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* (London: T & T Clark, 2010), 126.

portrayals of elite Temple ritual is misguided. Additionally, a weekly sacrifice from the livestock of pastoralists who rely on their animals' lifetime products for their subsistence and survival would have been expensive and unsustainable.

Other events which may have entailed the consumption of meat to mark its culturally and ritually freighted importance were life cycle events such as the taking of a woman, a family death, the arrival of important guests and the weaning of a child, for example. On the latter, Francesca Stavrakopoulou comments:

> …the weaning of a child was probably significant in a number of ways for the sociality of the home: not only was there a new member of the household, with whom the food and drink of the home (and its ritual meals) would be shared, but a weaned child was more likely to survive into adulthood and to become a productive member of the household as a socioeconomic unit.[245]

A shared feast to celebrate a new contributing member of the social household network thus marks the first in a sequence of further consumption events which create and maintain identities and relationships through shared food and drink. Overall, the occasions for meat consumption were heightened social events, many of which revolved specifically around food itself (harvests) and alterations to the household network which restructured the very entity that produced and prepared its food and drink (through the loss or addition of a member).

On the rare occasion that a sheep, goat, or cow was killed for meat consumption, the social network of the household lost a beloved animal household member. Such a sentiment may appear strange and misguided in a Western context where massive herds of livestock are reared, slaughtered and appear on supermarket shelves as cellophane-wrapped pieces of meat. They are commodities, rather than members of the social groups in which humans participate. By contrast, ethnographic accounts suggest that animals in the

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[245] Francesca Stavrakopoulou 'Religion at Home: The Materiality of Practice' in Susan Niditch ed. *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Ancient Israel* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2016), 357.

pastoral household had personhood: they were not simply possessions, but they had social lives amongst other persons of the household network. Aref Abu Rabia comments:

> The Bedouin are as devoted to their flock as they are to the family itself. Indeed, their bond with the flock is similar to the bond between members of the family. To them the flock is the centre of their interest, serving as the main focus of their conversation. Care of the flock dominates the minds of all members of the family, unifying them socially and economically.[246]

The Bedouin household's animals provide the household with its very identity. Not only this, but each individual animal is recognisable and has its own name and personal traits.[247] An Old Babylonian (early second millennium BCE) document listing items for inheritance includes sheep, oxen, a shrine-table and bushels of bitumen, for example. But what is striking is the inclusion of the pet-names of the animals. The first pair, an ox and cow are called Minam-epuš-ilum and Taribatum, and two further cows are called Ili-dumqi and Ištar-rimti-ili.[248] The names of these individual animals betrays the endearment towards household animal members that ancient pastoralists experienced.

A family's future wellbeing and survival rested on the flock, as this line from a Bedouin shepherding song shows: 'My destiny and that of the flock are bound together.'[249] The Samburu also appear to have this same attitude: 'herders have a great deal of genuine concern for the animals' well-being, out of intrinsic love for the animals and a recognition that their present and future well-being depends on them.'[250] It is perhaps a symbiotic process over time that transforms an animal from a mere resource to a co-dependent companion or member of kin:

> …farmers initially regard individual livestock animals as useful instruments of food and labour, but over time this relationship

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[246] Rabia, *The Negev Bedouin,* 76.
[247] Rabia, *The Negev Bedouin,* 76, 89.
[248] Text 5:5 in J. N. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History* (London: Routledge, 1992), 97.
[249] Rabia, *The Negev Bedouin,* 62.
[250] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes,* 236.

> becomes more intimate as the animal becomes a member of the household. Livestock are brought into the moral sphere of the household because their keepers feel a sense of duty to animals that diligently provide their secondary products and eventually, their primary products. Farmers are compelled through a moral obligation of reciprocity to return the favour by providing care and protection to their livestock. Over the two to three-year period of rearing and training, a draught animal is cared for by its owner or guardian in a controlling, domineering fashion, just as a child is treated (Theodossopoulos, 2005: 22). But over the longer period during which that animal works, its owner or guardian develops an affective, nurturing attitude that reflects a sense of kinship, just like a member of the family. The ontological shift that develops over the prolonged period of collaboration between animal and person does not entail the replacement of a domination ethos with a trust ethos. Rather, the prior exploitative attitude is mediated by affective care for an animal that is regarded as a member of the household.[251]

Like other human family members, the household animals are bound up emotionally with the positive sociality of interdependent household relationships and dependencies.

That household animals were loved in this same way in ancient Israel and Judah may be inferred from certain biblical texts. In 2 Sam 12:2-4 a tale is told about a poor man who owned a lamb with whom he shared what little food and drink he had and let it sleep with him. The lamb grew up with his children and was thought of by the poor man to be like a daughter, but the lamb is then stolen and killed by a rich man, which is considered by the hearer of this tale to be a heinous act. It thus appears plausible that animals, even sheep, could be considered as family members in a remarkably similar way to how today cats, dogs and other pets are viewed as ‘part of the family’. Indeed, Roland Boer

[251] Adam Allentuck, ‘Temporalities of human–livestock relationships in the late prehistory of the southern Levant’, *Journal of Social Archaeology* 15 (2015), 108-9. Citing Dimitrios Theodossopoulos ‘Care, order and usefulness: The context of the human-animal relationship in a Greek island community’ in J. Knight ed. *Animals in Person: Cultural Perspectives on Human-Animal Intimacies* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 15–35.

notes that the laws against bestiality in Leviticus and Deuteronomy (Lev 18:23; 20.15-16; Deut 27:21) effectively acknowledge that the animals of the household are extensions of the human family: 'the biblical laws assume that animals are on the same level, sexually, as a man's extended clan and his fellow men. The clan is not confined to human beings. Hence the laws on bestiality are located within a much-expanded range of incest taboos'.[252] Given that these social bonds did exist between humans and the animals on which they depended, sacrifice ought to be re-examined with such emotional attachments in mind.

Anthropological insights into the sacrifice of domestic animals are helpful here, for example:

> Animals were powerful constituents in the cultural landscape of the region, never simply 'resources' manipulated as packages of fur, hide, protein and fat. Their deaths did not go unremarked. Complex ideologies emerged to 'naturalise' or even 'expiate' the deaths of animals even when these events were part of a necessary process of converting sheep, goats, cattle and other species to ingestible or otherwise consumable products.[253]

What such a statement emphasises is the emotional need to account for the loss of an animal person of the household. Ritual, or sacrifice, may be a reaction to the necessity of animal slaughter and the guilt, or even grief, elicited from the animals' death. If such a notion is at play in sacrificial acts, explanations which focus on the performance of violence in sacrifice must be re-examined if not rejected outright. Animals were not distant, anonymous commodities for pastoral Israelites and Judahites. Consequently, the ways in which humans were dependent on their animals, emotionally, socially, and in terms of their contribution of lifetime products, must be taken into account when examining the sacrificial deaths of those animals.

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[252] Roland Boer, *The Sacred Economy of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015), 93.
[253] Brian Hesse, Paula Wapnish and Jonathan Greer, 'Scripts of Animal Sacrifice in Levantine Culture-History' in Anne M. Porter and Glenn M. Schwartz eds. *Sacred Killing: The Archaeology of Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 217.

Religious theorist Jonathan Z. Smith's exploration of the 'domestication of sacrifice' could be useful in helping us understand what meaning sacrifice may have held for the pastoralists of ancient Israel and Judah. He begins by commenting on the tendency to sacrifice domestic animals over wild, he states: 'I know of no unambiguous instance of animal sacrifice that is not of a domestic animal... I know of no unambiguous instance of animal sacrifice performed by hunters. Animal sacrifice appears to be, universally, the ritual killing of a domestic animal by agrarian or pastoralist societies.'[254] This has also been recognised by Joseph Henninger who writes that 'the most extensive development of ritual slaying is found among cultivators' and also highlights the fact that while hunters may offer a part of a hunted animal after it has been fortuitously killed, this act is not the same as sacrificially slaughtering an animal.[255] Similarly, Timothy Ingold also states that 'sacrifice archetypically involves the ritual slaughter of domestic animals.'[256] A concise survey of sacrificial practices from ethnographic history and archaeology by Nerissa Russell shows that it is indeed overwhelmingly domestic animals that are sacrificed, though there are exceptions.[257] Russell does however suggest that these rare cases of non-domesticated animal sacrifice could be seen as the 'secondary application of sacrificial logic' whereby practices originating from domestic animals are later applied to wild animals.[258] The issue of whether sacrifice universally applies only to domestic animals does not affect the following arguments below.

It has now come to be accepted that there is no universal origin of sacrifice, so whether all cultures sacrificed purely domestic animals or not has no bearing on my discussion of Israelite and Judahite sacrifice. However, what can be said is that for agro-pastoral ancient Israelites and Judahites, sacrifice was most

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[254] Jonathan Z. Smith, 'The Domestication of Sacrifice' in *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 149.
[255] Joseph Henninger, 'Sacrifice' in L. Jones ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, XII, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2005), 7998.
[256] Timothy Ingold, *The Appropriation of Nature,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 243. See also Timothy Insoll, 'Sacrifice' in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 154-5.
[257] Nerissa Russell, *Social Zooarchaeology: Humans and Animals in Prehistory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 99-125.
[258] Russell, *Social Zooarchaeology,* 125.

commonly performed on their domestic animals, whereas wild animals like the deer, gazelle and fish were not sacrificed.[259]

Jonathan Z. Smith sees the sacrifice of a domestic animal as an elaboration and exaggeration of the process of the domestication of animals itself.[260] He defines the domestication of animals as the process by which humans breed particular animals in order to modify their genetic traits and characteristics. This selective breeding, Smith suggests, is reflected in sacrifice, which is highly pre-determined in terms of space and time but also in the choice of specimen: it is selective killing. 'The complex requirements for the physical and/or behavioural characteristics for an animal chosen for sacrifice...represent to an extreme degree the same kinds of details that are sexually selected for by the breeder.'[261] As such, there is an inherent correlation between domesticated animals and sacrificial animals. Smith continues:

> If this everyday and continual activity of domestication is agrarian and pastoral man's prime mode of relation to the animal, then we can specify with precision the commonplace activity which is elaborated on obsessively and intellectually in sacrifice.[262]

For the pastoral Israelites and Judahites, this commonplace activity was the process of humans relating to animals and the acknowledgement of humans' dependence on them. Smith says that the domestication and sacrificial slaughter of an animal is dependent on 'the social acceptance of a '"delayed payoff,"'[263] by which he is probably referring to the end result of meat after the process of rearing a herd. This perspective is overly Western and anthropocentric in that it views animals as meat producers for the benefit of humans; it fails to account for the mutual dependencies between humans and animals. I would suggest that the delayed payoff from rearing animals for the ancient Israelites and Judahites was the milk, wool, and traction power that their domesticated flocks and cattle provided. Through selective breeding and

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[259] In 2 Sam24:24 David refuses to sacrifice an animal which cost him nothing and so insists on paying for the oxen instead; this may relate to why wild animals were not considered sacrificial, they were not 'owned'.
[260] Smith, 'Domestication,' 151. On birds and their sacrifice see section 2.10 below.
[261] Smith, 'Domestication', 151.
[262] Hesse et. al. 'Scripts of Animal Sacrifice', 151.
[263] Hesse et. al. 'Scripts of Animal Sacrifice', 151.

successful rearing these products would have increased in number and quality while animals for traction power would become larger and stronger. The delayed pay off does not necessarily have to be meat. This therefore means that sacrifice does not have to be thought of as alimentary only in terms of the immediate meal that sacrifice provides, but also in terms of the wider benefits that ensure survival such as clothing, dairy products, agrarian products, bone utensils, skin vessels and so on that were what made these animals economically and socially valuable.[264] For too long theorists of sacrifice have focused only on the animal's role as a meat source rather than acknowledging the archaeological and ethnographic data which demonstrate that animals provided a diverse and more vital set of resources for human survival than just meat. If meat then is not the only reason animals were sacrificed, attention must also be paid to non-meat sacrifice (a point to which I shall return).

According to Smith's theory, the reasons why the ancient Israelites and Judahites chose to rear sheep, goats and cows, are also the same reasons for their sacrificial status. These animals were reared and sacrificed because of their contribution to the household network, that is, their production of wool, milk and traction power. Sacrifice is an elaboration on domestication. If domestication or selective breeding is a focus on a particular animal and a perfection of that animal through its offspring, then sacrifice, in Smith's words, is a 'focusing on that focus' and a 'perfecting of that perfection'.[265] It could be possible therefore to say that the meaning sacrifice had for the inhabitants of Israel and Judah, was inextricably linked to the fact that these pastoralists were so dependent on these animals for their lifetime products. This ritual killing could possibly be viewed as a way of dealing with the emotional guilt of killing an animal household member which was seen to be of utmost importance to the family and which has contributed so much to that family throughout its lifetime:

> Sacrifice is one part of the effort by human groups to make sense of their animal killing activities. By sacrificing, in either the sense of 'giving to' or 'giving up' animals and their products, humans

[264] Note that in Deut 18:4 the fleece of a sheep is also given up to the priest when this animal is brought to be sacrificed. Cf. Hosea 2:7,11 in which wool (as well as oil and wine) are described as being offered to other 'lovers' (gods) and in v. 9 Yahweh takes the wool and other products away demonstrating that this concept of fertility includes wool.
[265] Smith, 'Domestication', 152.

> create complex systems of exploitation, *but one they can live with*.[266]

At the point of the animal's death, it acted as a social agent in that it connected humans to the divine and thus caused a ritual transformation within this social network. Perhaps imbuing the act of killing a beloved animal with such ritual importance, and marking the slaughter in ways that draw attention to the animal's status as a contributing and thus valued household member, allowed humans to make sense, and come to terms with, their slaughtering activities. Additionally, the meat consumed as a result was laden with the personhood of the animal who had contributed to the household.

The theme of an agricultural motivation for sacrifice is also taken up by Jonathan Klawans who suggests that the pastoral metaphors and imagery to describe the relationship between God and his worshippers found in many parts of the Hebrew Bible is indicative of *imitatio dei*.[267] Yahweh is depicted as a shepherd who tends and protects his flock: 'For he is our god, and we are the people he tends, the flock in his care' (Ps 95:7). He also feeds and waters them: 'Yahweh is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pasture; He leads me beside still waters' (Ps 23:1-2, see also Isa 40:11). However, he also kills them:[268]

> I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says Yahweh the god. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy (Ezek 34:15-16).

Klawans sees described here the same activities needed for sacrifice; in order to successfully rear an animal for slaughter it needs to be protected, fed and, if

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[266] Hesse, Wapnish and Greer, 'Scripts of Animal Sacrifice', 217. Emphasis added.
[267] Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 60-1.
[268] David Clines comments: '…what happens to the sheep who has the Lord as its shepherd is that once it has been led from green pastures through dark valleys it is guided, eventually, up to the house of the Lord. And we all know why sheep go the house of the Lord. Now, it might be a sheep's highest ambition to end up as a holocaust on a sacrificial altar rather than lamb chops in the butcher's shop.' 'Varieties of Indeterminacy' in *On the Way to the Postmodern: Old Testament Essays 1967-1998* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 128.

found to be unblemished, led to slaughter. If the shepherd fails to keep an animal safe and it becomes injured in some way, then it would be considered blemished and therefore unsuitable for sacrifice. Therefore, the domestication and sacrifice of animals of the herd and flock may have been understood as a reflection of Yahweh's tending of Israel as a flock.[269] Klawans then uses biblical extracts to show that Yahweh himself 'sacrifices,' such as Isa 63:1-6 wherein Yahweh wears a blood-stained garment and spatters blood, and Isa 34:6-7:[270]

> Yahweh has a sword; it is sated with blood,
> it is gorged with fat,
> with the blood of lambs and goats,
> with the fat of the kidneys of rams.
> For Yahweh has a sacrifice in Bozrah,
> a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
> Wild oxen shall fall with them,
> and young steers with the mighty bulls.
> Their land shall be soaked with blood,
> and their soil made rich with fat.

This phenomenon of gods sacrificing occurs elsewhere. In line 30 of the *Aqhat Epic* from Ugarit, the goddess Anat says that Baal will provide a feast which also would likely entail sacrifice. Prov 9:2 describes the goddess figure Lady Wisdom slaughtering animals for a banquet: 'She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table.' A text found in the house of Agapsharii in Ugarit (*KTU* 1.114) depicts the god El sacrificing and other gods joining in with the banqueting:[271]

> [1] El slaughtered game in his house,
> [2] Beasts in the midst of his palace.
> He invited the gods to the carving:
> [3] 'Eat, O gods, and drink,
> Drink wine to satiety,

[269] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple,* 60-61.
[270] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple,* 64-5.
[271] M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín eds. *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, UGARIT-Verlag, 1976).

[4] New wine to drunkenness!'
[…]
[10] Athtart prepared a haunch for him,
[11] Anat a shoulder…[272]

This clearly depicts the head of the pantheon, El, and the goddesses Athtart and Anat as participating in the slaughter and partitioning of meat while other gods are also present for 'the carving.' John McLaughlin sees this myth in *KTU* 1.114 alluded to in Ezek 39:17-20 in which Yahweh holds a sacrificial feast:[273]

> As for you, mortal, thus says the god Yahweh: Speak to the birds of every kind and to all the wild animals: Assemble and come, gather from all around to the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood. You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth—of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. You shall eat fat until you are filled, and drink blood until you are drunk, at the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you. And you shall be filled at my table with horses and charioteers, with warriors and all kinds of soldiers, says the god Yahweh.

Yahweh thus holds a sacrificial feast in in which birds and animals are invited to gorge themselves on the (human) flesh served at his table.

The notion of gods such as Yahweh, Baal and El as sacrificers themselves may have been a widespread belief in ancient southwest Asian societies. Kimberley Patton has written extensively about the gods of ancient Greece who also participate in sacrifice and other cultic actions. These gods are depicted on hundreds of Greek vases conducting sacrifice and libations as well in Greek texts which describe them sacrificing. Patton addresses the problems that

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[272] Translation by John L. McLaughlin, *The Marzēaḥ in the Prophetic Literature: References and Allusions in Light of the Extra-Biblical Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 25.
[273] McLaughlin, *The Marzēaḥ,* 206-13.

modern scholarship has had with the paradox of how a god can sacrifice when they are at the top of the hierarchy; if humans sacrifice to gods, to whom does a god sacrifice?[274] Patton's solution to such problems are to view these cultic acts as actions of divine reflexivity in which the gods are not sacrificing *to* anybody but instead 'the gods sacrifice *about* themselves or *because of* themselves.'[275] They participate in cultic activity because cultic activity belongs to them and they are its source, this is 'the religion of the gods'.[276] However, it is not unique to the Greek pantheon as we can see in the Ugaritic texts and biblical verses above. Patton states:

> The phenomenon of the ritualising god occurs in any number of other religious traditions, and that when this idea is found it 'describes' the divine realm as the source and agency for the world of all ritual actions, including human religious behaviour. The representation of sacrificing gods, or gods performing other rituals, both self-referentially comments upon the religious system as a whole and at the same time intensifies it.[277]

Such a phenomenon dovetails with Klawans' idea relating to *imatatio dei*: Yahweh raises and cares for his flock, he leads them to the slaughter and sacrifices them (at least according to the texts) just as the ancient pastoral Israelites and Judahites did with their flocks. It is possible that for male Israelite and Judahite farmers, their roles as shepherds, slaughterers and providers of meat aligned or connected them with the male deity who also participated in these behaviours, thereby indexing the masculinity and high status of this act.

There are archaeological discoveries that indicate again that domestic animals provided a rich pool of symbolism and imagery for religious expression. Indeed, such use of symbolism is not unique to ancient Israelite and Judahite religions, but could be expressed in all ritual:

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[274] Kimberley Patton, *Religion of the Gods: Ritual, Paradox and Reflexivity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 161-70.
[275] Patton, *Religion of the Gods,* 310.
[276] Patton, *Religion of the Gods,* 312.
[277] Patton, *Religion of the Gods,* 174.

> Since the behavioural sequences that make up a ritual tradition are enacted rather than created, the question arises of how ritual is remembered. One avenue is to create permanent evidence of sacrificial rituals, a kind of mnemonic device that calls up memory of the traditions that underlie or even require them. Consider contemporary examples of the private dispatch of an animal made public and permanent through commemoration; thus, the mounted trophy fish, elk head, bear skin rug, stuffed pet or animal cemetery. In ancient times, practitioners built reminders of ritual into their art and architecture, such as in cave paintings or the shape of temples.[278]

Such depictions of animals on ritual or religious objects occurs on a cult stand found at Ta'anach, now housed at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, which depicts goats on two of the four tiers and on the top tier another four-legged animal is depicted. This animal may be a calf - the animal frequently associated with the gods Baal, El and Yahweh, which is probably to be related to the biblical story of Jeroboam setting up golden calves at Dan and Bethel (1 Kgs 12:28-29). Bulls were associated with sexual potency and fertility as well as divine power.[279] Because this animal was bred in order to produce strong powerful beasts to pull ploughs, such associations would have been highly important qualities for agriculturalists.

It makes sense that the important gods and goddesses, who themselves were relied upon for blessings of fertility, were associated with animals that were also depended on by humans and seen as highly important for the wellbeing of a household's survival.[280] In this way, animals, humans and deities were entangled together, all contributing to the fertility of the land and all interacting socially and ritually through acts of care and shared consumption.

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[278] Hesse, Wapnish and Greer, 'Scripts of Animal Sacrifice', 221.
[279] Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period: V. I: From the Beginnings to the End of the Monarchy* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1994), 144.
[280] I am not suggesting that deities were only associated with domesticated animals, deities were also associated with wild animals, for example ibexes, snakes and lions.

Located at the centre of the Israelites' and Judahites' daily lives and wellbeing, animals thus played a part in the inherently religious nature of day to day activity. Sacrifice, rather than an act of violence, was an effective means of dealing with the loss of loved, household animals which also expressed human dependence on those creatures. In return for future fertility and security from the gods or deceased ancestors, humans sacrificed animals to those divine beings, thus all spheres were drawn together. Klawans summarises: 'Those who approach sacrifice in ancient Israel with the presumption that sacrifice is primitive and unethical cannot help us to understand what sacrificing meant to ancient Israel. Ancient Israel was a culture that not only lived with animals but thought and theologised with them too.'[281]

In Bedouin and Samburu cultures, men are responsible for the slaughtering and butchering of their animals.[282] Biblical texts also generally depict men as the appropriate performers of animal sacrifice.[283] Indeed, as Yahweh is generally depicted as a masculine deity, his role as a shepherd and slaughterer may well have bestowed an elevated status on men who also carried out these roles. In this way the flocks that were shepherded and the meat that was provided and distributed by men for their families had social impact. Meat encapsulated the role of the animal from which it came and thus drew together men, masculine deities, the animal and the household network. In this way, meat was a social agent, connecting different beings through its consumption and the operational chain through which it was produced. By facilitating the family's participation in the worship of Yahweh or other deities through animal sacrifice, men had a particular social and ritual role which was intimately connected to food consumption. Given that meat would only have been eaten on rare occasions, such as at feasts which were highly anticipated social gatherings,[284] men's role and status was thus elevated by facilitating such grand community occasions. I am not suggesting that other family members had no such roles, these will be discussed later, but in relation to meat in particular it seems men were most commonly entangled.

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[281] Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple,* 73.
[282] Rabia, *The Negev Bedouin*, 60; Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 97.
[283] Gen 18:7; 27:9; Judg 13:19; 1 Sam 1:5.
[284] Meyers, 'Feast Days', 237-8, 240-1.

Animals can be perceived as agents of ritual transformation in that they are actors and participants in certain performances which aim to reify and maintain socio-religious relations between the human and divine realm. Jonathan D. Morgan, in discussing the role of animals in the priestly construction of sacrifice in Leviticus also sees animals as having a performative role from the priests' perspective:

> …the insistence on physical perfection seems to have been to ensure that the animal was seen as worthy of, and able to live up to, the cultic role required of it. In order to perform its ritualistic role, the sacrificed animal needed to be holy… the sacrificed animal is a holy thing that performs a role on behalf of humans that they cannot and could never perform for themselves. In this sense, if the concept of substitution is at all a helpful one in this context, we must be clear that, rather than being about the importation of a more disposable alternative to bear the brunt of punishment, it is an exchange that involves the replacement of a less ritually capable and significant animal (the human) with a more ritually capable and significant one (the 'holy' sheep/bull/goat/bird).[285]

Morgan's interpretation rejects the idea that animals are passive victims in sacrifice and instead argues that their active participation in their 'cultic role' is imperative and necessary to the successful ritual work that sacrifice aims to achieve, and in fact, is a role that humans are simply incapable of carrying out. Sacrifice may also be perceived to effect social transformations between humans. Nancy Jay's work on patrilineal descent and sacrifice in the biblical texts and other ethnographic material on sacrificial systems is useful from a sociological perspective to understand how sacrifice frequently creates social continuity in biblical texts. For example, she argues that Isaac's status as first born of Abraham is inculcated through sacrifice (Gen 22:1-19), which effectively overrides Ishmael's first-born status which was 'merely' established via birth:[286]

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[285] Jonathan D. Morgan, *Land, Rest & Sacrifice: Ecological Reflections on the Book of Leviticus* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Exeter, 2008), 124-5.
[286] Nancy Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 102.

> When the crucial intergenerational link is between father and son, for which birth by itself cannot provide sure evidence, sacrificing may be considered essential for the continuity of the social order. What is needed to provide clear evidence of social and religious paternity is an act as definite and available to the sense as birth. When membership in patrilineal descent groups is identified by rights of participation in blood sacrifice, evidence of 'paternity' is created which is as certain as evidence of maternity, but far more flexible.[287]

In the culture of the ancient Israelites and Judahites, sacrifice was predominantly a male activity. Jay suggests that sacrifice fulfils the male's need for evidence that the patrilineage from father to son is secure; sacrifice identifies who is in the group and who is not; those that are able to participate and those who are not. In sacrifice then, the role of the animal is one of active transformation. For pastoral Israelites and Judahites, animal sacrifice marked 'large' social occasions and thus likely carried with it a social significance in the transformation or maintenance of social relations between individuals or larger groups. Additionally, sacrifice aims to maintain the beneficent divine presence and blessings of fertility within the earthly realm. Animals thus were ritual agents, and their meat is inherently ritual by dint of such potent social and ritual transformations animals could effect in their death.

In biblical texts, when women slaughter animals, it is depicted as 'deviant'. For example, when Saul visits the female necromancer of Endor she kills a calf and then feeds bread cakes to Saul to revive him: 'Now the woman had a fatted calf in the house. She quickly slaughtered it (תזבחהו), and she took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened cakes. She put them before Saul and his servants, and they ate' (1 Sam 28: 24-25). It is not clear whether she actually cooks the meat, but the fact the process is described as being 'quick' suggests that the text may instead be alluding to a blood ritual or other sacrificial act which is a part of the necromantic act of summoning Samuel's spirit or a subsequent apotropaic rite

[287] Nancy Jay, *Throughout your Generations*, 36.

to ease Saul's terror. The use of the root זבח 'sacrifice' instead of טבח 'kill' implies that the act was not merely a slaying of the animal, but likely had a ritual function. Regardless, the slaughter of the animal by a human female is depicted in only this instance and it is set in a time when necromancy has been outlawed by both Yahweh and the king.[288] Thus, the narrative is set already in the context of 'inappropriate' ritual action such that the female performance of sacrifice may have added to the 'deviant' actions of Saul.

In Ezekiel 16 and 23 women are metaphorically depicted as sacrificing children. Jerusalem is allegorically imaged as the wife of Yahweh and is accused of setting up altars (16:24-5, 31) and sacrificing children: 'You took your sons and your daughters, whom you had borne to me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. As if your whorings were not enough! You slaughtered my children and delivered them up as an offering to them' (16:20-1; cf. 23:37-9). In 16:38 it then says: 'I will judge you as women who commit adultery and shed blood are judged' (cf. 23:45). Julie Galambush states that '*fathers* would have offered their children as sacrifices', but the metaphoric shift to mothers serves to intensify the repulsion of the 'idolatrous' rituals in these texts.[289] The women in these texts are horrifying metaphors for the child sacrifice the author of Ezekiel is criticising, rather than real women. It therefore seems likely that while some female ritual specialists sacrificed animals, such as the woman of Endor, it was unlikely to have been the case for all female ritual specialists in an Israelite and Judahite household. Women generally had roles that revolved around the domestic area, such as making dung cakes, milking, and wool plucking as discussed above, and some others discussed below. Thus, it may be fair to say that women were not the primary animal sacrificers simply because they had many other roles for which they were primarily responsible, and not all women would have learnt the craft of necromancy like the woman of Endor.

Having presented the importance of animals (their contribution of lifetime products, their social roles in the household network, and the important associations of their slaughter), I shall now proceed to talk about crops. These

[288] The goddess figure of Lady Wisdom kills (טבחה) an animal in Prov 9:2.
[289] Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 84 n. 24.

crops were only possible to grow because of the ploughing labour provided by cattle, and the fertilising dung provided by the household animals.

2.8 Crops: Grains, Pulses, Vegetables and Fruit

Agricultural endeavours for the ancient Israelites and Judahites provided the majority of their food stuffs beyond the daily consumption of dairy products. For this reason, it is important to realise that such foods also played a ritual role in the household network. Meat should not be privileged as the major ritual player in events such as feasts and sacrifice, as I will demonstrate.

Grain crops such as wheat and barley were fundamental to the basic diet of ancient peoples. Magen Broshi has calculated that in Roman Palestine 'bread supplied half the daily calories (53-55%)'[290] and Lin Foxhall and Hamish Forbes suggest 70-75% of daily calories for people in the Roman Empire as a whole.[291] It is thus likely that inhabitants of Iron Age Israel and Judah also received a large amount of their daily calories from these grains; they were economical to produce, they could be stored for long periods of time, and provided important carbohydrates required for physical work. Archaeological artefacts such as grinding stones, storage jars, ovens and mixing bowls in both low and high status homes attest to the major role grain had in every household.[292] Grain was likely viewed as a more important food item than meat as a daily food source.

There were multiple grain species that could be cultivated successfully in ancient southwest Asia, but each had certain properties that made them less or more suitable in certain environments. Einkorn and emmer wheats, for example, grew well in cooler climates and thus were less prevalent in the area spanning from south Mesopotamia to Egypt.[293] These wheats had tough husks and thus

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[290] Magen Broshi, *Bread, Wine, Walls and Scrolls* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 123.
[291] Lin Foxhall and Hamish A. Forbes, 'Sitometreia: The Role of Grain as a Staple Food in Classical Antiquity', *Chiron* 12 (1982), 41-90.
[292] Carol Meyers, 'Having Their Space and Eating There Too: Bread Production and Female Power in Ancient Israelite Households', *Nashim* 5 (2002), 21-23.
[293] Daniel Zohary, Maria Hopf and Ehud Weiss, *Domestication of Plants in the Old World: The Origin and Spread of Domesticated Plants in South-west Asia, Europe, and the Mediterranean Basin*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 38.

required more processing compared to free-threshing wheats and barley. Einkorn wheat was nutritious but its flour did not rise well, making it better for porridges and probably was also grown as fodder for animals.[294] So-called 'naked' wheat and barley, which both required less processing, replaced emmer and einkorn as the grains of preference from the Bronze Age onwards.[295] Wheat is more nutritious than barley, however, having not only large quantities of carbohydrates (60-80%) but also protein (9-14%). It was this protein content than made wheat the best for risen bread compared to barley.[296] Barley, however, was more popular in Mesopotamia probably because it was hardier and had a higher salinity tolerance than wheat, producing higher yields in that geographic area.[297] Both wheat and barley were cultivated in ancient Israel, Judah and Jordan,[298] perhaps because barley was utilised for beer brewing (discussed in the next chapter), and was an important source of fodder for animals.[299] Being hardier, barley may have been viewed as a 'plan B' if the more desirable wheat harvest was not successful, cultivating a combination of both grains likely created a measure of food security. Einkorn wheat also, being very drought resistant, may have continued to be grown in order to provide additional grain supplies in dry years.[300] In Egypt, according to the Rhind Mathematical papyrus of the Second Intermediate Period (c. 1650 BCE – c. 1550 BCE), wheat was worth more than barley.[301]

One of the reasons that grain was so central to household survival in subsistence survival strategies is because it was easily stored and kept well. In this way it acted as a 'safety net' should the following year's harvest fail.[302] Grain was stored in a variety of different structures such as grain pits, silos,

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[294] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 34.
[295] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 47.
[296] Broshi, *Bread, Wine, Walls and Scrolls,* 125; Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 23.
[297] Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, 59-60.
[298] Hans Helbaek, 'Plant Economy in Ancient Lachish' in Olga Tufnell ed. *Lachish (Tell Ed-Duweir) Vol. 4, The Bronze Age* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 309-17; Amnon Ben-Tor and Yuval Portugali eds. *Tell Qiri A Village in the Jezreel Valley; Report of The Archaeological Excavations 1975-1977* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1987), 236-43; Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 173-4.
[299] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 52.
[300] Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, 62.
[301] Charles F. Nims, 'The Bread and Beer Problems of the Moscow Mathematical Papyrus,' *Egypt Exploration Society* 44 (1958), 58.
[302] On the role of grain in early state formation see Scott, *Against the Grain*, 116-37, esp. 122-4.

granaries and store houses.[303] Grain pits were small plastered or stone lined pits usually used domestically; these have been found at many sites such as Beth Shemesh, Tell en-Nasbeh, Beth Zur and Tell Halif.[304] They allowed family members to have ready access to their grain for daily usage as they were close by to domestic buildings. Silos were larger grain pits which provided bulk grain storage on a public level, possibly owned by an institution or the state. These have been found in Bet Shemesh, Hazor and Megiddo.[305] Granaries found at Tell Jemmeh and dated to the Persian period are thought to have held enough grain to provide for 35,000 people for two months.[306] These storage facilities were intended to preserve food for a large social group, rather than for private use. The early Iron Age site Izbet Sartah utilised many large grain storage units of the silo type, 110 in number each with a volume of 1.4 cubic metres.[307] This clearly indicates that the production of excess grain was meant to provide enough supply should other food sources become unobtainable.

Grains could be eaten in multiple ways, making them a versatile as well as stable food source. If grains were harvested while still green, the grains could be eaten raw as a snack, being tender and sweet.[308] Alternatively, grains could be parched by roasting them on a fire - either on a griddle or in the fire itself. After roasting, the grain could be squeezed out of the husk and eaten – this may have been a convenient source of food when away from the homestead as a small fire could have been quickly constructed from brush for this purpose.[309]

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[303] Borowski, *Agriculture*, 71-83.
[304] Elihu Grant, *Rumeilah, being Ain Shems, Excavations (Palestine) Part 3* (Haverford: Haverford College, 1934), 5, 61; Chester McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I: Excavated Under the Direction of William Badé* (Berkeley: Palestine Institute of Pacific School of Religion and the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1947), 136, 210-11, 215. Ovid R. Sellers, Robert W. Funk, John L. McKenzie, Paul Lapp and Nancy Lapp eds. *The 1957 Excavation at Beth-Zur,* (Cambridge, MA: The American Schools of Oriental Research, 1968), 8, 27. Borowski, *Agriculture*, 74.
[305] Joe D. Seger and Oded Borowski, 'The First Two Seasons at Tell Halif', *The Biblical Archaeologist* 40 (1997), 162; Yigael Yadin, *Hazor I: An Account of the First Season of Excavations 1955,* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press 1958), 7. Robert S. Lamon and Geoffrey M. Shipton, *Megiddo I Seasons of 1925-34, Strata 1-5*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 66-8.
[306] Flinders Petrie, *Gerar*, (London: British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1928), 9.
[307] Baruch Rosen, 'Subsistence Economy of Stratum II' in Israel Finkelstein ed. *ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah: An Early Iron Age Site near Rosh Haʿayin, Israel* (Oxford: Biblical Archaeological Review, 1986), 171.
[308] Shmuel Avitsur, 'The Way to Bread: The Example of the Land of Israel' *Tools and Tillage* (1975), 228-9.
[309] Kurtis Peters, *Hebrew Lexical Semantics and Daily Life in Ancient Israel: What's Cooking in Biblical Hebrew* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 89.

Grains could also be boiled into a porridge or stew depending on the other ingredients used. This method was a time efficient use of grain as the boiling process meant that grain did not need to be ground beforehand meaning significant quantities of both time and energy were saved.[310] Beer was also brewed from grains, and such brewing activities were intimately interwoven with bread making, for instance, beer froth was likely used as a raising agent when added to bread dough and stubborn grains that would not grind into fine flour could be used for making beer. (Beer will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.)

Grinding grains is well established to be a labour intensive activity that was one of the primary responsibilities of women and was carried out on a daily basis.[311] Meyers calculates that for a household of six people, it would have taken three hours to turn grain into flour for bread in ancient Israel and Judah. Additionally, this would then have to be kneaded with water to turn it into dough and then baked.[312] This strenuous work is likely to have caused permanent physical stress on women's bodies which is visible in skeletal remains from other cultures in which women also shoulder the burden of incessant grinding.[313] Grain thus acted as a social agent by connecting women to the maintenance of the household; it symbolised and inculcated their identity and status as providers of nourishment and sustenance to other household members.

There is a common misconception, recently explored by Brian Hayden et. al., that processing grains into flour for bread increases their nutritional value, and thus the physical expenditure of energy is well worth the consequent benefits.[314] Conversely, dry grinding grains actually reduces their nutritional value considerably, specifically their protein content decreases, making it more nutritional not to grind grains prior to consumption.[315] Instead, it has been argued that the arduous task of grinding for many hours per day was seen as

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[310] Brian Hayden, Laurie Nixon-Darcus and Logan Ansell, 'Our "Daily Bread"?: The Origins of Grinding Grains and Breadmaking' in Steel and Zinn, *Exploring the Materiality of Food 'Stuffs'*, 62, 64.
[311] Hayden, Nixon-Darcus and Ansell, 'Our "Daily Bread"?', 59-62.
[312] Meyers, 'Having Their Space and Eating There Too', 22.
[313] Patricia Crown, 'Women's Role in Changing Cuisine' in Patricia Crown ed., *Women and Men in the Prehispanic Southwest* (Sante Fe: SAR Press, 2000), 224. See also Scott, *Against the Grain*, 83.
[314] Hayden, Nixon-Darcus and Ansell, 'Our "Daily Bread"?', 62-64.
[315] Foxhall and Forbes, 'Sitometreia', 46-7.

'worth it' because bread was more pleasurable to consume. The starches of ground grains in the form of bread are absorbed by the body quicker than those in whole grains, being unrefined. The effect of this absorption is that the body receives a quicker rush of glucose, rather than a slow, long lasting release.[316] As the diet of ancient Israelites and Judahites was generally lacking in sources of glucose, it may have been the case that eating bread created a pleasant somatic sensation that we may colloquially refer to as a 'sugar rush'. Such a reaction in the body produces certain effects such as stress reduction, pain reduction, energy bursts, increased awareness, and even euphoria.[317] It has thus been suggested that the development of grinding grains for bread flour, despite the energy expense compared to making gruel or porridge, was spurred on by these positive experiences and perhaps originally was prepared specifically for feasts.[318] Evidently, bread became not only a staple food, but a preferred food, that was worth the extra energy costs to prepare: 'Given such circumstances, it is perhaps not surprising that grinding grain on a regular basis became "normal" fare for all self-respecting households in subsistence communities and that the lack of bread became a sign of extreme poverty.'[319]

Biblical texts suggest that offerings were taken from both the grain of the threshing floor and the baked bread itself for Yahweh (Num 15:17-21; Lev 24:5-9): 'From your first batch of dough you shall present a loaf as an offering; you shall offer it up just as you offer up from the threshing floor' (Num 15:20). Bread offerings are particularly significant in goddess worship, specifically of the Queen of Heaven, as highlighted in Jer 7:28 and 44:19. As women were likely the primary bread makers, it would appear that they had a significant role as the ritual specialist and facilitator of the household's worship of such deities.[320] This is not to say that women were the primary worshippers of goddesses, indeed

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316 Hayden, Nixon-Darcus and Ansell, 'Our "Daily Bread"?', 62.
317 Hayden, Nixon-Darcus and Ansell, 'Our "Daily Bread"?', 66-7.
318 Hayden, Nixon-Darcus and Ansell, 'Our "Daily Bread"?', 67-8.
319 Hayden, Nixon-Darcus and Ansell, 'Our "Daily Bread"?', 69.
320 For further information about the worship of the Queen of Heaven, see Susan Ackerman, '"And the Women Knead Dough": The Worship of the Queen of Heaven in Sixth-Century Judah' in Alice Bach ed. *Women in the Hebrew Bible* (London: Routledge, 1999), 21-31; Cornelis Houtman, 'Queen of Heaven' in Karel Van der Toorn, Bob Becking and Pieter W. Van Der Horst eds. *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 2nd Ed, (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1999), 678-80; Ebeling, *Women's Lives*, 76-7; Susan Ackerman, 'Queen of Heaven' in Carol Meyers ed., *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books and the New Testament,* 2nd Ed. (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2001), 539.

the whole family will likely have worshipped goddesses as well as gods and the divine dead (Jer 7:18).[321] Rather, women were the enablers of such worship via their bread making (and beer brewing) responsibilities, thus women's identity and agency were inculcated through these inherently ritual foods.

Such ritual roles were, however, more than just 'doing the right thing' as has been patronisingly suggested by William Dever:

> ...bread making in biblical times was not merely a chore. It had religious (though not 'theological') connotations, because women who had little independent status could excel in this role. They could provide the basic foodstuff for a family. They could be valued and respected for their virtuous labour. And that is what religion is all about - doing the right thing…And in their practice of what they knew was instinctively to be the right thing, women found themselves in harmony with their world.[322]

More than just 'virtuous labour', bread making was a necessary and fundamental aspect of household life socially, physiologically and ritually. It did not just have 'religious' or '"theological"' 'connotations', but bread making was an arduous act in which women were ritual agents and facilitated ritual life for the rest of the household network.

As stated above, the material cultures of the ancient Israelite and Judahite household cannot be divorced from the inherently religious and ritualised life that was embedded in a world inhabited by supra-natural beings and other agents. The breadmaking process could be viewed as socially and ritually entangled as follows: First, the land is ploughed by cattle who have been

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[321] Saul Olyan states: 'To affirm the evident importance of female deities in various forms of Israelite religion, however, does not require us to accept claims that women were particularly devoted to goddesses. I am not convinced that goddesses played a greater role in the devotion of women than they did in men's worship, either at home or in the sanctuary, since there is no cogent evidence to support this claim.' 'What Do We Really Know about Women's Rites in the Israelite Family Context?' *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religion*, 10 (2010), 58. While I agree with this statement, such a view does not preclude the fact that women facilitated the worship of goddesses for the rest of the family - providing them with a certain identity as well as agency - in the same way that men facilitated other forms of worship through their particular responsibilities which also provided them with certain identities and agency.

[322] Dever, *The Lives of Ordinary People*, 164, 166.

brought into the world because of the blessings of fertility and nourishment of divine beings. Second, the wheat or barley grows as a result of divine blessings of fertility on the land and its crops. Third, such blessing is acknowledged in harvest celebrations and feasting, creating positive social relationships between humans and divine beings. Grain is offered back to these beings in some kind of 'first fruits' sacrifice.[323] Fourth, grain ground into flour by women was likely subject to fears that the flour could become tainted or magically contaminated and thus prayers or incantations were likely implemented during the grinding and kneading processes.[324] Fifth, bread loaves were offered to deities, such as the Queen of Heaven, and were consumed in shared meals between human and divine members of the household network.

Bread (and beer) can thus be seen as actors in the network, forming and maintaining social relationships between household members and deities. The multiple processes implicit in bread making attest to the numerous ways 'things' participate in social relationships and thus intervene in human action. Bread was a particularly powerful social agent, not only in physically nourishing consumers, but also in creating positive emotional experiences in shared consumption between household members and deities who participated in meals. It connected the animals with their humans in that they provided the ploughing for the grains to grow and the dung which fuelled the bread oven. Bread, all too often perceived as the simplest of foods, is actually intensely entangled within its social, ritual, and nutritional location.

Pulses were domesticated along with the staple cereals of wheat and barley, possibly because they add nitrogen back into soil which cereals require and remove.[325] Humans thus became dependent on, or entangled with, pulses because they were needed for adequate soil conditions for the cultivation of cereals. Pulses also complement cereals in that they are much higher in protein and thus provided a source of protein in the absence of meat, which as discussed above, was rarely consumed by much of the ancient Israelite and

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[323] Rainer Albertz claims the offering of firstfruits was historically the earliest and most widespread kind of sacrifice: 'The aim is to secure the power of blessing for future births and harvests by deliberate abstention from firstfruits with a religious motivation.' Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion*. 102. See also William Dever, *Did God have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 4.
[324] Meyers, 'Feast Days', 242.
[325] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 75; Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, 63.

Judahite population.[326] Lentils, peas, faba beans (broad beans), and chickpeas were the main pulse crops and ranged from containing 25% to 20% protein, lentils being at the higher end of the spectrum.[327] For the Roman period, Broshi calculates that such pulses could have contributed around 17% of the daily calories for inhabitants in Palestine.[328] Isotopic analyses of bone collagen from Jordan, however, show that more legumes were eaten in Bronze Age periods than in the Roman era when animal protein constituted a larger part of the diet.[329] The successful growth of faba beans and lentils may have been dependent on rainfall,[330] but peas were more capable of growing in arid conditions.[331] Regardless, pulses were domesticated early and their remains are found in archaeological sites of Israel Palestine dating from Bronze Age to Iron Age strata and earlier.[332] Pulses were tasty and nutritious, they could have been eaten whole, ground into a paste like hummus, and added to stews with grains.

Vegetables are highly perishable, so while we have cereal grains, pulse seeds, and fruit stones from which to draw archaeological conclusions about their consumption, very little comparable data is available for vegetables.[333] Literary evidence from Mesopotamia, and iconographic depictions from Egyptian tombs, are, however, beneficial for making some tentative suggestions. Thus, it is likely that vegetable gardens were cultivated in Egypt and Mesopotamia and grew melons (including watermelon), leeks, garlic, onion, lettuce, and possibly also beetroots and turnips.[334] Garlic remains, however, have been discovered in a cave near Ein Gedi in Israel/Palestine dating to the Middle Chalcolithic

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[326] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 75.
[327] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 77, 82, 87, 89.
[328] Broshi, *Bread, Wine, Walls,* 122.
[329] Michela Sandias and Gundula Müldner, 'Diet and herding strategies in a changing environment: Stable isotope analysis of Bronze Age and Late Antique skeletal remains from Ya'amūn, Jordan', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 63 (2015), 28-9.
[330] Nathan MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008), 28.
[331] Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, 63.
[332] Amihai Mazar & Israel Carmi, 'Radiocarbon Dates from Iron Age Strata at Tel Beth Shean and Tel Rehov' *Radiocarbon* 43 (2001), 1333; Yael Mahler-Slasky and Mordechai E. Kislev 'Lathyrus Consumption in Late Bronze and Iron Age Sites in Israel: An Aegean Affinity', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 37 (2010), 2477-2485; Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 80-81, 86, 89, 91.
[333] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 153.
[334] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 153; Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, 64-5.

period.[335] The lack of archaeological remains should not lead to the assumption that vegetable crops were not cultivated and consumed by ancient Israelites and Judahites, this would be an argument from silence. Instead, vegetables likely did add variety to the daily fare as they did in neighbouring contexts. Additionally, awareness of some vegetables and their desirability is indicated by the literary depiction of the complaining Israelites in the wilderness who remember such foods in Egypt: 'the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic' (Num 11:5).

Fortunately there is much more archaeological evidence concerning the prevalence of fruit trees in ancient Israel and Judah. Grapevines, fig trees, date palms and olive trees were the most common fruit bearing trees. Fruit trees take years to start bearing fruit after planting, making fruit a much later delayed pay off than cereals and pulses.[336] The grapevine was likely domesticated in the Levant during the Early Bronze Age.[337] While the primary reason for growing vineyards was probably the production of wine (discussed in the next chapter), grapes could be preserved through drying and then used to form dried raisin cakes which would keep well for long durations thus reserving the fruit for consumption later in the year when the annual harvest had long passed. Pips from grapes or raisins have been found in Iron Age strata at Lachish, Khirbet Abu Tabaq, Tell Qiri, Tell Halif and Shiloh.[338]

Figs also could be eaten fresh in the summer and autumn after the harvests, and dried to be eaten yearlong consequently providing a source of sugar even in the winter. Fig trees thrived across ancient Israel and Judah as they can survive in semi-arid conditions with stony thin soil coverage.[339] Archaeologists of the early Neolithic sites of Gilgal and Netiv Hagdud have argued that the fig tree was domesticated in this area of the Jordan Valley 11,400 years ago, by planting branches of selected trees.[340] This could have preceded the domestication of cereal crops, perhaps demonstrating the desirability of figs. Others have suggested that the more likely origin of domestication was in

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[335] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 156.
[336] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 114.
[337] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 125.
[338] Borowski, *Agriculture,* 113-4.
[339] Borowski, *Agriculture,* 114.
[340] Mordechai E. Kislev, Anat Hartmann and Ofer Bar-Yosef, 'Response to Comment on "Early Domesticated Fig in the Jordan Valley"', *Science* 314 (2006), 1683.

Arabia and Mesopotamia 6000 years ago.[341] As fig seeds are much smaller than other fruit seeds they can only be found in archaeological sites if flotation techniques are employed, therefore samples from the Iron Age have only been found so far at Beth-Shemesh.[342] Fig pips from earlier contexts (the earliest being 800,000 years ago!), have been found in Israel/Palestine, Syria and Jordan but these may have been wild figs rather than domesticated.[343] Texts from Mesopotamia attest to the fig being dried on string with apple, and served to the king in the Old Akkadian period (2350-2100 BCE) and offered at the Temple in Girsu (c. 2500–2375 BCE).[344] It is apparent that in the Levant, from the Bronze Age onwards, fig trees were a domesticated food source along with grapevines and olive trees.[345]

Pomegranates are not indigenous to the southern Levant, indicating that the remains of pomegranates found in Bronze Ages contexts in Jordan and Israel Palestine are representative of their domestication and consumption.[346] Date palms, while being extremely salt tolerant and thus the dominant fruit tree of Mesopotamia, were a very productive source of fruit in hotter climates: each year one tree could provide 100-200kg fruit. [347] Dates are also higher in sugar than grapes being 60-70% sugar over the 15-25% sugar content of grapes, thus dates were an important staple food for those in areas hot enough to grow palms.[348]

Fruit trees, providing the most accessible source of sugar and visibly flourishing year after year while not being cut down and replanted like cereal or pulse crops, may have signified sweet stability. Biblical texts appear to portray such trees as extremely emblematic of Israel/Judah and its state of peace: ‘During Solomon’s lifetime Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, all of them under their vines and fig trees’ (1 King 4:25). [349] This sentiment, and the ban on cutting down fruit trees in Deut 20:19-20, may

[341] David Sutton, *Figs: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 35-38.
[342] Elihu Grant and Ernest Wright, *Ains Shems,* 129-130.
[343] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 129.
[344] Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, 70.
[345] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 300.
[346] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 135.
[347] Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, 69.
[348] Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization*, 96; Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 121, 131.
[349] See also Hos 2:12, 9:10, Joel 1:7, 12; 2:22; Jer 5:17 Amos 4:9, Mic 4:4, Hab 3:17, Hag 2:19.

indicate that fruit trees had connotations of divine protection, its production of fruit being a blessing from deities.

The pruning of fruit trees in Lev 19:23-25 appears to be ritually equated with male circumcision:

> When you enter the land and plant any tree for food, you shall regard its fruit as its foreskin. Three years it shall be uncircumcised for you, not to be eaten. In the fourth year all its fruit shall be set aside for the jubilation before the Lord; and only in the fifth year may you use its fruit – that its yield to you may be increased: I Yahweh am your God.[350]

Howard Eilberg-Schwartz draws a comparison between the fruit production of trees and the way in which circumcision of male Israelites functions symbolically to increase male procreativity and fertility:[351] Circumcision 'is a symbolic cut that ensures human fertility. Similarly, pruning a fruit tree is crucial for maximising its yield either by developing a good framework or maximising the surface area for fruit production.'[352] It is possible, however, that this circumcision is more than just a symbolic allusion and that rather, circumcising a fruit tree through pruning had ritual impact: 'When a farmer discourages a tree's yield during its juvenile period, God will see to it that the tree bears a large number of fruit'.[353] Given the inherently ritualised world in which Israelites and Judahites were embedded, it is reasonable to see even the pruning of fruit trees as a ritual act.

Olive oil was highly valued as a product from the olive tree because of its multiple uses. For example, olive oil was the prime fuel for lamps and was also used in ritual anointing – indeed, these activities occur far more frequently in biblical texts than the consumption of olive oil.[354] Broshi calculates that olive oil could have contributed 11% of daily calories in the Roman period Palestine.[355] However, it is unlikely that olive oil was consumed in large quantities by most

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[350] Translation by Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 149, 251 n.11.
[351] Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism*, 149-54.
[352] Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism*, 150-1.
[353] Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism*, 152.
[354] For example, lamps: Exod 25:6, 31, 27:20, Lev 24:2; Anointing: Eodx 29:7, Lev 21:10, Num 35:25 etc. For food: Deut 32:13; 1 King 17:12; Ezek 16:13, 19.
[355] Broshi, *Bread, Wine, Walls and Scrolls,* 122.

people in Iron Age IIA-IIC Israel and Judah and was rather utilised in cooking processes, such as the baking and frying of other foods.[356] The olive fruits themselves were too bitter to eat without pickling or brining them, which do not appear to have been processing techniques employed until the Hellenistic period. It is reasonable to suggest that olive production in the Iron Age periods was for the oil alone.[357] Olive trees were likely chopped down at the end of their lives for their wood, which would have been used for crafting certain vessel and other objects, including cult statues for example. We know from archaeological finds that olive oil production was widespread, as oil press installations from the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age have been found at many sites including Beth Shemesh, Gezer, Tel Dan, Khirbet Jemain, Tell Batash, Tell Miqne and Tell Beit Mirsim.[358] Also, the fact that so many olive pits, oil lamps and oil lamp fragments have been found in domestic Irons Age settings attests to the fact the most people would have had access to olive oil, especially as it keeps well for substantial amounts of time.[359]

2.9 Vegetal Sacrifice

As Kathryn McClymond has correctly pointed out in her thought-provoking book *Beyond Sacred Violence*, sacrifice should not be thought of as a purely 'animal' or 'meat' ritual.[360] Instead, vegetal offerings, such as those of wheat and barley as well as liquid offerings such as oil and wine, also need a) to be considered as sacrificial, and b) to 'fit' logically with animal sacrifice.[361] While Jonathan Z. Smith does not discuss either vegetal or liquid sacrifice, likely due to his Western, anthropocentric leanings, a strong case can be made for the use of Smith's theory concerning sacrifice and domestication for vegetal and liquid sacrifice. The wheat and barley that can be offered as part of the מנחה offering in

[356] Avitsur, 'The Way to Bread', 235; Peters, *Hebrew Lexical Semantics*, 85, 196.
[357] Caroline Grigson, 'Plough and Pasture in the Early Economy of the Southern Levant' in Thomas E. Levy ed. *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (London: Continuum, 1995), 265; Ebeling, *Women's Lives*, 121.
[358] Oded Borowski, *Agriculture,* 120-3.
[359] Zohary, Hopf and Weiss, *Domestication of Plants*, 116; Oded Borowski, *Agriculture,* 117*,* 126.
[360] Kathryn McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008).
[361] McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence*, 90-1.

biblical texts (for example, Lev 2:1-15; 6:15, 20-1; 14:10; Num 5:15; 6:15; 7:13-79) are just as domesticated as the cattle, sheep and goats are. McClymond points out the domesticated characteristic of vegetal offerings: 'Vegetal offerings are selected from the domesticated realm of plant life, just as animal victims are selected from the domesticated realm of animal life. Physical criteria (including the absence of blemishes) play a role in distinguishing suitable from unsuitable vegetation.'[362]

Dovetailing with Smith's theory, the reason why wheat and barley were domesticated is the same reason they were suitable and appropriate objects for sacrifice; they grew well in the land on which the people settled and they provided the cultivators with a food resource which was imperative for their survival. McClymond concurs: 'According to biblical requirements, the grain used for the מנחה is always wheat or barley, the primary grain products of the region inhabited by the Israelites...the grains seem to be chosen solely on the basis of availability.'[363] In other words the wheat and barley are available to the agriculturalists because they grow well there, they are domesticated and cultivated (an activity which occupied the daily lives of most people), and are thus sacrificed in recognition of the deities' blessings of fertility. One of the reasons McClymond gives for why vegetal sacrifices have so often been overlooked by previous theorists of sacrifice is that they occur too frequently to attract much attention; they are not seen as a 'special occasion'.[364] Grain sacrifices can stand in for animal sacrifices such as in the חטאת offering, which means they have often been imagined as only substitutes, rather than ideal primary offerings (Lev 5:11).[365] For the majority of ordinary Israelites and Judahites, grains were likely sacrificed more frequently than animals were: just as grains were eaten more frequently than animals, so grain products played a larger part in the inherently ritual lives of Israelites and Judahites than meat. Animal sacrifice may have been a rarer, and thus a higher-profile or 'larger' festive occasion, but in terms of quantity and the building blocks of daily religious life, grain was paramount. Indeed, the archaeological evidence suggests that in many domestic assemblages, such as those found in domestic

[362] McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence*, 87.
[363] McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence,* 72-73.
[364] McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence,* 89.
[365] McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence,* 89.

buildings at Megiddo, cultic utensils found allowed for vegetal offerings and liquid libations but not animal slaughters.[366]

The liquid offerings of oil which McClymond briefly discusses also fit well into Smith's theory concerning the relationship between domestication and sacrifice. McClymond points out that oil is mixed in with flour as a part of the מנחה sacrifices (e.g. Lev 2:1, 4-7; 6:15, 21; Num 6:15; 7:13; Ezek 45:24). Rather than just being a cooking aid, she posits that the use of oil may be a kind of anointing similar to that of anointing priests and utensils, or that it could be a way of associating the מנחה with Yahweh in such texts.[367] The use of oil, a product of domesticated olive trees, as a sacrificial item dovetails with Smith's theory that domestication and sacrifice both acknowledge the delayed pay off from caring for and producing certain food stuffs. Oil was likely a particularly valuable sacrifice that was used frequently in elite anointing rituals as well as being the main fuel source for lamps in addition to contributing to the daily calorie intake.

It was unlikely that olive oil would ever have been consumed (drank) alone, and this use of oil is mimicked in the sacrificial process. When oil is offered on an altar as an elaboration of the domestication process, it is consumed on the altar, just as it would have been consumed by humans – by mixing it with flour or spreading and soaking bread in it. Sacrificial offerings thus appear to reflect 'meals':

> Indeed, aspects of such worship seem to have found their way into Jewish practices and traditions, especially in the form of the bread of the Presence, which was placed before Yahweh on a golden table each week, and regarded as holy. That this bread was presented in the Sanctuary itself, on a table cloth with plates, bowls and cups for drink-offerings, would seem to suggest very

[366] Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion,* 100.
[367] McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence,* 95. Such texts state, for example: 'When you present a grain offering baked in the oven, it shall be of choice flour: unleavened cakes mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers spread with oil' (Lev 2:4); 'If you offer it for thanksgiving, you shall offer with the thank offering unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes of choice flour well soaked in oil' (Lev 7:12).

> strongly that it was supposed originally to have been a formal meal for the god.[368]

Given the reflection in biblical texts of the use of oil in grain and flour offerings, it seems reasonable to presume that oil was also likely used in household offerings to deities and the divine dead. Oil was thus a highly ritualised item being used to anoint, to fuel light, and likely also as a cosmetic or health-related product for the skin.[369] The longevity of olive trees may have also contributed to olive oil's use in cosmetics and medicines.[370]

Oil can be perceived as a social agent in that it constructed certain social contexts in which other agents participated. Olive oil facilitated human action by providing light to counter the darkness after sunset, thus only through the relationship between the human and the oil lamp could agency be effected by allowing the human to see. That oil also ritually transformed food, utensils, and people, and additionally had medicinal uses, also attests to how entangled olive oil was in its social context. Humans depended on oil, but olive trees depended on humans for their cultivation and the processing of olives. In the anointing role of oil, the way in which olive oil drew together the human sphere and the divine sphere should also be noted.

Having discussed the major food stuffs of the Israelite and Judahite household and their ritual and social roles, I shall now progress onto 'other' food items. These are items that were rarer than those discussed above, but still necessitate discussion in order to gain a fuller picture of the roles of different food sources in ancient Israel and Judah.

2.10 Other Food Items: Birds, Fish, Honey, and Pigs

Borowski states that even the birds that were sacrificial were domesticated, as hunting for them could easily have caused the bird an injury making it

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[368] Stuart Weeks, 'Man-Made Gods? Idolatry in the Old Testament' in Stephen C. Barton ed., *Idolatry: False Worship in the Bible, Early Judaism and Christianity* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 11.
[369] Ebeling, *Women's Lives*, 71-2, 121.
[370] Olive trees have an average lifespan of 500 years but many surpass this.

blemished and unsuitable for sacrifice.[371] This assumption is not supported by archaeological evidence; it is not possible to securely conclude that birds were domesticated, that is, bred and reared in captivity (as opposed to captured from the wild), before the Hellenistic period in Israel and Judah.[372] The assumption has emerged from applying the construction of sacrifice in biblical texts, which utilises birds as sacrificial animals, to the fact that other sacrificial animals were domesticated and then leaping to the conclusion that birds too must have been domesticated.[373] Archaeological evidence demonstrates that partridges (*Alectoris chukar*) and doves/pigeons (*Columba livia*) were consumed at Iron I and II sites,[374] but numbers were far greater at the sites excavated in Jerusalem.[375] It is thus likely that partridges and pigeons were frequently utilised as sacrifices in the Jerusalem cult, despite likely being wild (and captured), rather than domesticated animals.[376] Russell provides examples of some wild animals which, after being captured and fed, effectively become suitable for sacrifice; they have become sufficiently identified with the sacrificer and possibly become like property, something which can be 'given up'.[377] While such 'taming' is not domestication in the strict scientific sense, it does suggest that the capturing of animals and fattening them up effected a transition from wild to 'owned'. Peter Altmann notes that '…biblical scholars should include *at least* tame or caught animals as part of the animals that could function as offerings in the Priestly and other texts.'[378] Captured birds provided a cheaper option for occasions when an animal sacrifice was required, and being small in size were easy to store in cages, transport, and sell. Thus, a captured bird could be bought near to a cultic location, like Jerusalem, and sacrificed, which would save a more valuable animal, such as a sheep or bull, from being lost from the

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[371] Oded Borowski, *Every Living Thing: Daily Use of Animals in Ancient Israel* (Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, 1997), 154.
[372] Peter Altmann and Abra Spiciarich, 'Chickens, Partridges, and the /tor/ of Ancient Israel and the Hebrew Bible', forthcoming. Having said that, it is not possible from faunal remains to identify between wild and domestic doves/pigeons (*Columba livia*), so if they were being domesticated this is not identifiable to the archaeozoologist.
[373] Peter Altmann, *Banned Birds: The Birds of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14* (Mohr Siebeck: forthcoming), 21-22.
[374] For example, quantities of pigeon remains were found at Hibet el-Msas. Eitan Tchernov and Amir Drori, 'Economic Patterns and Environmental Conditions at Hirbet El-Msas during the Early Iron Age' in V. Fritz and A. Kempinski eds. *Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen auf der Hirbet El-Msas [Tel Masos] 1972-1975* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), 218.
[375] Altmann and Spiciarich, 'Chickens, Partridges', forthcoming.
[376] Altmann and Spiciarich, 'Chickens, Partridges', forthcoming.
[377] Russell, *Social Zooarchaeology,* 97, 125.
[378] Altmann, *Banned Birds*, 28, see also 31.

household. This strategy may account for the prevalence of dove/pigeon remains at sites near to the Jerusalem temple mount in Iron Age contexts and their relative infrequence in domestic contexts.[379] While bird meat evidently did play a part in the Israelite and Judahite diet, it was likely not a regularly consumed item for those who utilised a subsistence survival strategy as hunting for wild animals would have diverted significant attention and energy from the management of crops and herds. Bird meat, like that of deer and gazelle, was probably a very occasional addition to the daily fare.

It is well established that ancient Israelites and Judahites consumed large quantities of fish as imports from Egypt, rather than fishing locally for the majority of their fish.[380] Even inland areas appear to have indirect or direct trade links with the coast in order to purchase and consume a variety of fish types as demonstrated by quantities of fish remains in the City of David excavations and the Temple Mount.[381] In the Iron Age IIA-IIC Israelites and Judahites were likely unable to fish in the Mediterranean due to the coasts being controlled by Phoenician and Philistine cities and settlements.[382] But in the post-exilic period, the Sea of Galilee became utilised for fishing to a greater extent by inhabitants of Judea.[383] Isotopic analysis of bone collagen from Jordan shows that fish was not a significant component of diet in the Bronze Age period in this region.[384]

By contrast, fishing in both Egypt and Mesopotamia was widely practised,[385] and there is some evidence that marine shells were imported into Israel and Judah from Egypt. Although it is uncertain whether Israelites and Judahites were consuming Egyptian-sourced shellfish, they appear at least to have used

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379 Altmann and Spiciarich, 'Chickens, Partridges', forthcoming.
380 Tyler R. Yoder, *Fishers of Fish and Fishers of Men: Fishing Imagery in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 2016), 25-31; Hanan Lernau and Omri Lernau, 'Fish Remains' in A. de Groot and D. T. Ariel eds. *Excavations at the City of David, 1978-1985: Stratigraphical, Environmental, and Other Reports* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1992), 134; H Hanan Lernau and Omri Lernau, 'Fish Bone Remains' in E. Mazar and B. Mazar eds. *Excavations in the South of the Temple Mount: The Ophel of Biblical Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1989), 155; Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 175; MacDonald, *What did the Ancient Israelites Eat?* 38.
381 Lernau and Lernau, 'Fish Remains', 134; Lernau and Lernau, 'Fish Bone Remains', 155.
382 Yoder, *Fishers of Fish*, 26.
383 Mendel Nun, 'Fishing' in Eric M. Meyers ed., *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Archaeology in the Near East,* Vol.2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 317.
384 Sandias and Müldner, 'Diet and herding strategies in a changing environment', 29.
385 See the helpful overview of fishing in Egypt and Mesopotamia in Yoder, *Fishers of Fish,* 12-25.

these shells as beads in ornamentation and in mortuary contexts.[386] Other shells that frequently turn up in archaeological excavations may well have been transported with clay removed from river beds for making mud bricks and other clay objects.[387]

Fish was not eaten fresh. In order to transport fish over large distances in hot weather the fish would have to be dried, smoked or salted in order to preserve it from bacterial decay and infestation from flies. Drying fish preserves it for several months, while smoking and salting allows it to remain in transit for even longer.[388] As a consequence it was remarkably easy, and evidently popular, to transport and sell preserved fish in Jerusalem and other sites at a distance from either the coast or freshwater rivers.[389] Fish from the Mediterranean included sea breams, groupers, meagers, and gray mullets and the parrotfish from the Red Sea.[390] Freshwater fish included the Nile catfish, St. Peter's fish, carp, mouthbreeders, and the Nile perch, and would probably have come from the Yarkon river or from the Nile. Such Egyptian species indicate 'that during the Iron Age there was a lively trade in fish with Egypt and northern Sinai, not only by landlocked sites but also by sites near their own marine or freshwater fish resources.'[391]

Nathan MacDonald comments that the cost of transport would probably have made fish too expensive for all but the elite of major urban centres.[392] Van Neer, however, argues that the imported fish remains found at a diverse range of Iron Age I-IIC settlements at small and large ports, as well as inland sites, are 'possibly reflecting the spread of Egyptian(izing) items from the elite to a larger

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[386] Daniella E. Bar-Yosef and Joseph Heller, 'Mollusca From Yiftah'el, Lower Galilee, Israel' *Paléorient* 13 (1987), 134; David S. Reese, Henk K. Mienis and Fred R. Woodward, 'On the Trade of Shells and Fish from the Nile River', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 264 (1986), 82-3.
[387] Bar-Yosef and Heller, 'Mollusca From Yiftah'el', 133.
[388] Wim Van Neer, Omri Lernau, Renée Friedman, Gregory Mumford, Jeroen Poblóme and Marc Waelkens, 'Fish remains from Archaeological Sites as Indicators of Former Trade Connections in the Eastern Mediterranean', *Paléorient* 30, (2004), 102.
[389] For the archaeological reports that report fish remains see also: Omri Lernau, 'Fish Bones' in A. Kempinski ed. *Tel Kabri: The 1986-1993 Excavation Seasons* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2002), 409-27; Omri Lernau and Daniel Golani, 'Section B: The Osteological Remains (Aquatic)' in D. Ussishkin ed. *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994) Vol. 5* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2004), 2456-87; Omri. Lernau, 'Fish Bones from Horbat Rosh Zayit,' in Z. Gal and Y. Alexandre eds. *Horbat Rosh Zayit: An Iron Age Storage Fort and Village* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2000), 233-37.
[390] Van Neer, 'Fish Remains,' 137.
[391] Borowski, *Every Living Thing,* 175.
[392] MacDonald, *What did the Ancient Israelites Eat?* 38.

portion of the population.'[393] Indeed, the excavation report from Megiddo also states that a diverse range of local and imported fish remains were found in simple domestic dwellings as opposed to 'wealthy neighbourhoods', which Omri Lernau sees as indicating that many breeds of fish were accessible food items.[394] Despite the simple dwellings, Megiddo was still an urban centre, populated not by 'ordinary' people who depended on survival subsistence strategies, but those who relied upon other sources of economic security.[395] As it is unlikely that the vast majority of people who relied on subsistence survival strategies were able to participate in the market economy system,[396] it also seems likely that fish were an infrequent foodstuff for non-city dwellers. Thus, fish were less 'entangled' in the social and ritual lives of Israelite and Judahites being a purchased item, and thus is less prominent in Hebrew Bible texts. This observation has been made concerning the biblical reflections of fish and ritual: 'That fish do not appear in any such list [of sacrificial animals in the Hebrew Bible] does not imply a deliberate exclusion; it simply affirms the fact that fishing did not play a major role within the Israelite economy.'[397] Fish, as an import in most spheres of Iron Age Israelite and Judahite cultures, is a peripheral foodstuff in comparison to the pastoral animals and cultivated crops that they depended on.

Honey was a highly prized food stuff in ancient Israel and Judah, likely due to its relative rarity. There are several words in the Hebrew Bible that mean honey or honeycomb. דבש is the most common, occurring 54 times, נפת which occurs five times meaning honeycomb (Ps 19:10; Prov 5:3; 24:23; 27:7; Song 4:11) and יער which occurs once (1 Sam 14:27) and also refers to honeycomb. In many scholarly works about food in the Bible (and specifically about honey) it is common to find the claim that honey, דבש, was a syrup made from boiled-down fruits.[398] The explanation for this oft repeated statement is that in Arabic there is

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[393] Van Neer et. al., *Fish Remains*, 126.
[394] Omri Lernau, 'Fish Bones' in I. Finkelstein, D. Ussishkin, and B. Halpern eds. *Megiddo III: The 1992-1996 Seasons, Vol. 2* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2000), 475.
[395] Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 111; Philip Davies, 'Urban Religion and Rural Religion' in Stavrakopoulou and Barton, *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah*, 105-7. Douglas A. Knight, *Law, Power and Justice in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 75.
[396] Aharon Sasson, *Animal Husbandry in Ancient Israel* (London: Equinox, 2010), 7-8.
[397] Yoder, *Fishers of Fish*, 27 n.91.
[398] For example, MacDonald, *What did the Ancient Israelites Eat?* 39; Philip J. King, Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 85; Richard A. Freund, 'The Land Which Bled Forth Its Bounty: An Exile Image of the Land of Israel',

an equivalent word, *dibs*, which appears to have a cognate root and specifically means fruit syrup. This explanation appears to date back to as early as 1793 in a book by Samuel Bochart called *Hierozoicon; sive de animalibus S. Scripturae. Recensuit suis Notis adjectis*.[399] Unfortunately, scholars of recent times have not assessed whether this association with the Arabic *dibs* is sufficient evidence to assume that the majority of cases of דבש in the Bible refer to fruit syrup.

דבש does refer to wild bee honey in a number of cases: Deut 32:13 describes honey as being sucked out of a rock, a common location of bee hives; in Judg 14:8-18, Samson finds a beehive in the carcass of a lion; in 1 Sam 14:25-9, Saul and the men find honey in a tree; in Ps 81:16 honey is again located in a rock, and there are also references to honey alongside references to honeycomb (Ps 19:10, Prov 24:13, Song 5:1). However, we have no examples in the Hebrew Bible of fruits being boiled down or reduced to a syrup like consistency, so it is impossible to discern if this syrup was actually eaten or even known. There are also no instances of דבש occurring in a construct form with a fruit name, such as 'honey of dates' or 'honey of pomegranates' so there is no way to link דבש to being a fruit product. In Deut 8:8 it says: 'A land of wheat and barley, of vines and figs and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey.' If here honey refers to fruit syrup rather than bee honey then the verse is technically repeating itself as it has already listed three different fruit sources; grape vines, figs and pomegranates, and the second phrase 'a land of olive trees and honey' cannot be a summary of the previous list as olives have not been mentioned.[400] Olive trees and honey are two additional, different aspects of the land and therefore it is more likely that bee honey is being referred to here.

Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament 13, (1999), 291, 297; Athalya Brenner, 'Risk and Reward, Reward and Risk' in Diana Lipton ed. *From Forbidden Fruit to Milk and Honey: A Commentary on Food in the Torah* (Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2018), 205. See also Ellen Frankel and Betsy P Teutsch, *The Encyclopaedia of Jewish Symbols*, (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 75; John H. Walton and Victor H. Matthews, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Genesis-Deuteronomy* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 146; John J. Pilch, *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible* (Minnesota, Liturgical Press, 1999), 54.

[399] Samuel Bochart, *Hierozoicon; sive de animalibus S. Scripturae. Recensuit suis Notis adjectis,* (Lipsiae: E.F.C. Rosenmuller, 1793).

[400] *Contra* Freund, 'The Land Which Bled Forth Its Bounty', 292.

Recent archaeological discoveries also demonstrate that large scale bee keeping was practised from the Iron Age IIA period at Tel Rehov.[401] A total of twenty five hives were uncovered, though as the area had clearly experienced destruction there could have been a total of 180 hives; there may also be more in the unexcavated areas around the exposed hives.[402] If there were just 100 hives active per year, they would have yielded an estimated 300 to 500kg of honey and 50-70kg of beeswax.[403] There is no mention of bee keeping in the Hebrew Bible, but honey is listed as one of the permitted first fruit offerings along with other produce that the Israelites grow in their crops, as long as it is not burnt (Lev 2:11-12). This would suggest that bees were domesticated and therefore the offering of honey as a first fruits offering fits with the idea of the domestication of sacrifice (as discussed above). The archaeological evidence points to a large scale and developed strategy for the production of honey and other bee products. This leads to the possibility that even in the lists of produce which are associated with trade, gifts or sacrifice, it is bee honey that is in view (Gen 43:11, 2 Sam 17:29, 1 King 14:3, 2 Chr 31:5, Ezek 27:17). At Tel Rehov a small four horned altar was found roughly fifteen feet from the bee hives along with other cultic objects.[404] Given that honey was forbidden to be burnt in an offering in Lev 2:11-12, we might surmise that such a ritual was actually being practised, as the altar at Tel Rehov might suggest. It is possible that honey was burned on the altar as part of a ritual aimed at securing successful honey harvests,[405] this indicates that it likely was bee honey, rather than fruit syrup, that was the substance indicated in Leviticus. Overall, there is no evidence to support the claims that דבש refers to fruit syrup in the Hebrew Bible. It is probable that wealthy Israelites and Judahites could have purchased bee honey from towns that had working hives - such as Tel Rehov - in order to sweeten other foodstuffs, and less wealthy families could have collected bee honey from the wild on the fortuitous occasions it was found.

Pork consumption by Israelites and Judahites is an ambiguous but culturally freighted topic in biblical studies and the archaeology of Israel/Palestine. The

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[401] Amihai Mazar and Nava Panitz-Cohen ‘It is the Land of Honey: Beekeeping at Tel Reḥov’, *Near Eastern Archaeology* 70 (2007), 202.
[402] Mazar, ‘It is the Land of Honey’, 207.
[403] Mazar, ‘It is the Land of Honey’, 211.
[404] Mazar, ‘It is the Land of Honey’, 209, 212-3.
[405] Mazar, ‘It is the Land of Honey’ 212-3.

existence of pig bones in Iron Age archaeological contexts has been of great interest to scholars as it has been seen as a way to mark identity between Israelites on the one hand and Philistines or Canaanites on the other. The assumption that Israelites and Judahites shunned pork in the Iron Age is based on the biblical casting of the pig as an 'unclean' animal, and supposedly supported by the large amount of pig bones found at certain Philistine Iron Age sites in distinction to non-Philistine sites.[406] DNA analysis on pig remains from Israel/Palestine suggest that the pigs consumed were originally from the Aegean and thus likely brought over by the Sea People on ships.[407] However, the use of pig consumption as an ethnic marker is a deeply problematic method given the uncertainties about what 'ethnicity' is as a category.[408] Additionally, pig remains vary between Philistine sites: some, such as Tel Qasile, the Nahal Patish temple, and Qubur el-Walaydah, have as few pig remains as many 'Israelite' sites, demonstrating that pig consumption cannot be used as a litmus test for ethnicity anyway.[409] Indeed, it now appears that pork was not avoided by Israelites and Judahites at all places and all times. New data and analysis of pig remains at many more sites in the north and south of Israel/Palestine has revealed a complex picture. Sites such as Hazor, Megiddo, Tell Yoqeneam, and Beth Shean contained between 3.2% and 7.8% of pig bones in the total eaten faunal remains in the Iron Age IIB strata, whereas sites such as Lachish, Tell Halif, Tel es-Seba and Mosa had less than 2% of pig bones in their total faunal remains.[410] The difference between these two groups is their geographical locations: the first set belong to the northern kingdom of Israel and the latter set belong to the southern kingdom of Judah. Judah consumed relatively less pork than the north, thus it is argued that when the northern kingdom collapsed in

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[406]Avi Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance* (London: Equinox, 2006), 35.
[407] Meirav Meiri, Philipp W. Stockhammer, Nimrod Marom, Guy Bar-Oz, Lidar Sapir-Hen, Peggy Morgenstern, Stella Macheridis, Baruch Rosen, Dorothée Huchon, Joseph Maran & Israel Finkelstein, 'Eastern Mediterranean mobility in the Bronze and Early Iron Ages: Inferences from ancient DNA of pigs and cattle', *Scientific reports* 7 (2017), 5.
[408] For a critique of the idea of an Israelite ethnicity see Diana Edelman, 'Ethnicity and Early Israel' in Mark G. Brett ed., *Ethnicity and the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 25-55.
[409] Aren M. Maeir, Louise A. Hitchcock and Liora Kolska-Horwitz, 'On the Construction and Transformation of Philistine Identity', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 32 (2013), 4-6.
[410] Lidar Sapir-Hen, Guy Bar-Oz, Yuval Gadot and Israel Finkelstein, 'Pig Husbandry in Iron Age Israel and Judah: New Insights Regarding the Origin of the "Taboo"', *Zeitschrift Des Deutschen Palastina-Vereins* 129 (2013), 1-20. See table and map on 4-8.

720 BCE and the inhabitants migrated south they brought their increased pig eating habits with them.[411]

Such discussions of the archaeological remains of pigs show that pork was consumed in small quantities from early on in Judah, and in Israel in larger quantities. The reasons for utilising pigs as a meat source are clear: pigs eat human refuse and thus are of little or no cost to subsistence survival strategies; they gain weight quickly, and they give birth to large litters with short gestation periods making them fast breeders. Melinda Zeder offers a fascinating insight into pig consumption in ancient southwest Asia:

> Owing to a combination of water and food requirements, heat tolerance and behaviour, small-scale, sty-based management by individual, sedentary households was the optimal strategy for taking advantage of this animal's remarkable meat producing abilities in the ancient Near East.[412]

Pigs could be fed on any remains, including those of animals, not needed for human consumption.[413] Thus, a couple of pigs could have provided a household with a fast-growing, cost-efficient meat source. Food that could be consumed by humans did not need to be diverted to pigs in the way cattle required; rather, pigs could survive by scavenging alone. Additionally, pigs aided households by removing detritus, keeping the household cleaner by scavenging on the waste - including human faecal matter, which was thrown out near the living area thus curtailing the spread of diseases and parasites.[414] In this way pigs too can be seen as contributors to the household while alive and were also entangled in the lives of humans and their food, especially in terms of food's destruction and excretion. The pig bones that have been found in domestic settings in Judah

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[411] Sapir-Hen et al. 'Pig Husbandry', 13.
[412] Melinda A. Zeder, 'The Role of Pigs in Near Eastern Subsistence: A View from the Southern Levant' in Joe D. Seger ed. *Retrieving the Past*: *Essays on Archaeological Research and Methodology in Honour of Gus W. Van Beek* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 309.
[413] Brian Hesse, 'Pig Lovers and Pig Haters: Patterns of Palestinian Pork Production', *Journal of Ethnobiology 10 (*1990), 204; Juliet Clutton-Brock, *Domesticated Animals from Early Times* (London: Heineman, 1981), 73-4.
[414] Frederick J. Simoons, *Eat Not This Flesh: Food Avoidances from Prehistory to the Present*, 2nd Ed. (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994) 81-2; Robert L. Miller, 'Hogs and Hygiene', *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 76 (1990), 125-140. On the disposal of human excrement in ancient Israel and Judah outside the house see King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 70.

such as in stratum III of area S at Lachish,[415] and the farmstead at Khirbet er-Ras near Jerusalem, likely indicates that people knew the advantages of raising swine and were not concerned with (or perhaps, not affected by) an elite cultural preference to abstain from pork.[416]

The reasons for the biblical ruling against pork consumption are not clear, and likely never will be. The reasons provided in Lev 11:7-8 (the pig does not chew the cud and does not possess cloven hooves) are likely later than the custom of avoiding pork.[417] Indeed, there appears to have been widespread ambivalence towards the pig across ancient southwest Asia and Egypt which is likely to have informed and influenced attitudes towards the pig in Israel and Judah. For example, in Egypt throughout both the Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom (2050-1085 BCE) pigs were owned and kept by kings, were bred in temples, and were part of cultic life.[418] But at the same time there is evidence of anti-pig sentiments in inscriptions and iconography from these periods, especially in relation to offerings to the god Horus.[419] It may have been the case that priests specifically rejected pork consumption due to some kind of 'defiling' association, but for the rest of the population pigs could be kept and consumed.[420] In Sumer, pigs are viewed as an important source of meat and apparently were widely consumed, but during specific times or at specific rites, pigs were banned.[421] The Hittites also kept pigs as scavengers amongst their household animals, but they did not grant pigs a place in the sacrificial system in the same way as goats, sheep and cattle. Instead, pigs were utilised in rituals and offerings to chthonic beings.[422] A similar picture emerges from Babylonia and Assyria: pork

[415] Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah,* 72.
[416] Shafer- Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 97.
[417] Jacob Milgrom, 'Book of Leviticus' in Fred Skolnik ed. *Encyclopedia Judaica* Vol. 12 (2006), 737.
[418] Simoons, *Eat Not This Flesh*, 18-20.
[419] Simoons, *Eat Not This Flesh*, 18-20.
[420] Simoons, *Eat Not This Flesh*, 21.
[421] Henri Limet, 'The Cuisine of ancient Sumer', *The Biblical Archaeologist* 50 (1987), 137; Karel Van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia: A Comparative* Study (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1985), 34; Simoons, *Eat Not This Flesh*, 24.
[422] Billie Jean Collins, 'A Channel to the Underworld in Syria', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67, (2004), 54-56. And see Billie Jean Collins, 'Pigs at the Gate: Hittite Pig Sacrifice in its Eastern Mediterranean Context', *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 6 (2006), 175-6; Roland De Vaux, 'Le sacrifice des porcs en Palestine et dans l'Ancien Orient' in *Bible et Orient* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967), 261; Simoons, *Eat Not This Flesh*, 23.

was in some cases acceptable as a food stuff;[423] pigs were used in household rituals associated with 'evil' entities; and were also regarded in some elite texts as 'defiling'.[424]

Certain biblical texts appear to suggest that pigs in ancient Israel and Judah were also utilised in rituals deemed to be 'deviant' by biblical writers (Isa 65:3-5; Isa 66:17), these will be discussed in the final chapter. Nicole Ruane has suggested that an additional reason why pigs were seen as 'unclean' in biblical texts is because they did not produce a clear 'first-born' as 'clean' land animals do, due to the fact that pigs birth in litters.[425] It seems reasonable, to my mind, to draw a connection between the pig's apparent role in relation to chthonic beings and their eating habits of scavenging on human waste, including dead animal carcasses and the dead of their own kind, without any ill effects. The pig's apparent immunity to the literal consumption of death may well have rendered it simultaneously efficient as a meat producer and an efficient apotropaic, ritual animal. Consequently, pigs may well have been associated with a powerful magical and ritual agency, which was helpful and contributed to the household network, but a threat to elite cultic power, and thus rendered deviant in the texts these elites produced.

2.11 Summary

This chapter has established important themes that will run throughout the thesis, as well as interrogating the roles of foods and animals in ancient Israelite and Judahite households. I have argued that food is inherently ritual and perceived as a blessing from deities and the divine dead. Food is also an actor, ritually and socially, creating and maintaining identities and relationships between human, divine, and animal household members. I have specifically drawn attention to the social role and personhood of animals as contributing household members who were loved by their humans. Such a perspective may

[423] Max Price, Kathryn Grossman and Tate Paulette, 'Pigs and the pastoral bias: The other animal economy in northern Mesopotamia (3000–2000 BCE)', *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 48 (2017), 46-62.
[424] Simoons, *Eat Not This Flesh*, 25-6.
[425] Nicole J. Ruane, 'Pigs, Purity, and Patrilineality: The Multiparity of Swine and Its Problems for Biblical Ritual and Gender Construction', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 134 (2015), 489-504.

challenge the way biblical scholars perceive sacrifice. Similarly, the focus on animal sacrifice is shifted by viewing vegetal sacrifice (of grain, bread and oil) as a more dominant and frequent form of sacrifice, which likely was performed on a daily basis and was facilitated by women in particular. Other food items, such as birds, honey, and pigs, have been re-evaluated in this chapter: contrary to common assumptions, birds were not domesticated; honey was not made from fruit; and pigs, while holding an ambivalent position, could be utilised as a cost-effective meat source. Having established the ritual and social roles of foods in ancient Israelite and Judahite households, I shall now proceed to examine alcohol using the same lenses of agency and entanglement.

Chapter Three: Alcohol Cultures in Iron Age Israel and Judah

3.1 Overview

The Rebellious Son of Deut 21:18-21 is typically understood to have consumed both food and alcohol excessively and thus this chapter seeks to understand the roles of alcohol in ancient Israel and Judah. As with food, the socio-ritual agency of alcohol makes it a key component in the lives of ancient Israelites and Judahites, and its sequences of production and consumption are thus potential sites for the construction of identity and sociality between both human and non-human members of the social network. In order to understand why the Rebellious Son's consumption of alcohol is punished in Deut 21:18-21 it is necessary to first understand what typical alcohol consumption looked like and what socio-religious meanings it held and constructed.

Consumed substances are agents in multiple ways, one of which is in their impact on the body which ingests and digests it. But alcohol also has another physiological effect beyond the nutritional which also affects the mind: it has a psychopharmacological or psychoactive effect. For alcohol specifically, as opposed to other mind-altering drugs, this effect is referred to as inebriation, intoxication or drunkenness. As an intoxicating substance which might effect a change in the way one thinks, speaks and behaves, alcohol, for a modern interpreter in a Western context, has specific cultural values and morals attached to it that other objects and substances, such as water, animals, land, buildings and bread, do not. As Janet Chrzan states: 'Cultural ideas about bodily practices such as intoxicant use tend to get linked to morality, so that adoption and transmission of such beliefs and behaviours becomes natural and normal.'[426] In all cultures alcohol indexes certain social preferences, but these indices may themselves be ambiguous and fluid within any given culture. Different English speaking countries have different values towards alcohol, for example, in the United States there is an unusually high rate of self-declared

[426] Janet Chrzan, *Alcohol: Social Drinking in Cultural Context* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 83-4.

abstinence from alcohol consumption compared to other non-Muslim countries due to the era of prohibition and the influence of Christian movements such as Southern Baptism and evangelicalism.[427] Such cultural preferences are susceptible to being read into biblical texts anachronistically which may skew the way in which alcohol consumption in Hebrew Bible texts is read and interpreted.[428]

The cultural biases and moral frameworks that are attached to alcohol in modern Western contexts are particular to those living in that context, just as the values that ancient Israelites and Judahites attached to alcohol were specific to them. As interpreters we need to be aware that our own cultural experience of alcohol should not and must not be applied to ancient Israel and Judah. If one wants to argue that alcohol was viewed as a morally laden substance in ancient times because of its intoxicating qualities and association with drunken behaviour, then it has to be demonstrated that sobriety, restraint and self-control were important values which alcohol use risked subverting. However, this kind of generalisation can easily be arrived at when we think of alcohol in ancient times as simply a product for purchase and consumption as it is for many today. In ancient southwest Asia, alcohol was produced through the laborious agricultural efforts of vintners and brewers. This chapter will argue that alcohol was an inherently ritual substance that had to be cultivated and prepared, stored and consumed by family members, and utilised by ritual specialists. These are activities that the majority of drinkers today have little dealings with. Carey Ellen Walsh states ‘a generalisation can easily result about how Israelites valued the product of wine divorced from its agricultural context.’[429] Further to the agricultural context, I would argue that the ritual context is imperative for a nuanced and culturally sensitive understanding of the socio-religious values and roles of alcohol. To better understand why certain forms of alcohol consumption might be restricted or punished, ‘normal’

[427] Chrzan, *Alcohol: Social Drinking,* 82.
[428] For further discussion on how alcohol has culturally and socially specific connotations see Mark Jayne, Gill Valentine and Sarah L. Holloway*, Alcohol, Drinking, Drunkenness: (Dis)orderly Spaces* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), esp. 58-9, 110.
[429] Carey Ellen Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 6.

consumption and its surrounding social entanglements related to its production and nature as a socio-religious agent must first be established.

This chapter will fill a lacuna in biblical scholarship that has studied food in that it will provide information about the production sequences of beer brewing and viticulture (wine-making), and will demonstrate the vital role alcohol and its associated activities played ritually and socially in the Israelite and Judahite household. In addition I will reflect on why beer has received such little attention in biblical scholarship compared to wine. But first I will explore the unique properties of alcohol as a mind-altering agent in order to foreground the subsequent discussions.

3.2 The Psychoactive Effects of Alcohol

The consumption of alcohol, usually wine, is often noted in biblical scholarship as a frequent component of ancient Israelite and Judahite diet.[430] Beyond such statements, scholars rarely explore the consequences of ingesting a psychoactive substance and the way in which drunkenness is an embodied experience with sensual features that impact the consumer's sociality with other beings and their perception of their environment or world more broadly. Such an observation has also been pointed out in the study of other ancient cultures, for example Yannis Hamilakis points out that wine should not be studied as 'part of a depersonalized, abstract, theoretical edifice' of a 'static, timeless pattern of a Mediterranean cultivation regime', but instead should be 'connected to the politics of bodily experiences, pleasures and feelings' and as such, occasions of alcohol consumption may be viewed as 'key strategies of competition,

[430] Leann Pace, 'Feasting and Everyday Meals in the World of the Hebrew Bible: The Relationship Reexamined through Material Culture and Texts', In P. Altmann and J. Fu eds. *Feasting in the Archaeology and Texts of the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 187-191; Nathan MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008), 19; William G. Dever, *The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: Where Archaeology and the Bible Intersect* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 170; Carol Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 47-8; Cynthia Shafer-Elliot, *Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Bible* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2013), 22; Jennie Ebeling, *Women's Lives in Biblical Times* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 51-3, 64-7.

domination, and resistance in a fluid social and political landscape.'[431] Rather than being viewed as a commodity or a product that could only be made when surplus supplies allowed, the pursuit of alcohol should instead be viewed as a central pursuit because of its social value. This has also been observed by anthropologists Michael Dietler and Ingrid Herbich:

> …it must be understood by archaeologists that drinking is not a social epiphenomenon to which ›surplus‹ production may be dedicated when circumstances allow a psychological desire for drink to be satisfied. Rather, it is a crucial social practice and a central element of the political economy to which it is common, cross-culturally, to find 15–25 percent of household grain supplies regularly devoted…[432]

Alcohol is imperative for social negotiation because of its psychoactive properties. Scientifically speaking, alcohol is a sedative-hypnotic class drug which means that it reduces anxiety, increases relaxation and thus when drinking with others reduces inhibitions.[433] Alcohol consumption thus has the result of making people more talkative, willing to take risks, more confident and, depending on the social context, may encourage sexual behaviour.[434] Alcohol also impairs judgement, motor-control functions and self-perception and thus leads to acting in ways one would not when sober.[435] These effects can thus create conditions which are conducive to sociality and bonding between participants and thus alcohol can be thought of as a social agent in that it lubricates social interactions. Alternatively, alcohol's effects may lead to anti-social behaviours such as physical and verbal aggression which would also play a role in the negotiation and restructuring of social relationships.[436] Indeed, the

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[431] Yannis Hamilakis, 'Food Technologies/Technologies of the Body: The Social Context of Wine and Oil Production and Consumption in Bronze Age Crete', *World Archaeology* 31 (1999), 49-50.
[432] Michael Dietler and Ingrid Herbich, 'Liquid Material Culture: Following the Flow of Beer among the Luo of Kenya' in Hans-Peter Wotzka ed. *Grundlegungen: Beiträge zur europäischen und afrikanischen Archäologie für Manfred K.H. Eggert* (Tübingen: Francke, 2006), 406.
[433] Jerrold S. Meyer & Linda F. Quenzer, *Psychopharmacology: Drugs, The Brain, and Behavior* (Sunderland, Mass.: Sinauer Associates, 2005), 224.
[434] Meyer & Quenzer, *Psychopharmacology,* 224. Alcohol and sex is discussed in Chapter 5.
[435] Meyer & Quenzer, *Psychopharmacology,* 224.
[436] While in some societies there is a close correlation between alcohol and violence there is no clear scientific cause-and-effect relationship between the two as more complex factors appear to be involved. See Meyer & Quenzer, *Psychopharmacology,* 227.

use of alcohol in social situations for the production, maintenance, and sometimes disruption, of social relationships has been emphasised by some scholars who have focused on alcohol use in various ancient contexts.[437] What, however, has received little scholarly attention by comparison, is the role of alcohol's psychoactive effects in ritual contexts.

The psychoactive quality of alcohol has been viewed as conducive to experiences of the supernatural in the work of Dietler and Herbich:

> …drink is food with a difference: it is a psychoactive agent that produces altered states of consciousness and induces changes in behavior. This mysterious transformative power of alcohol tends to promote an active role for it in ritual and ceremonial practices, to imbue it with special symbolic importance, and to insure that its use is closely governed by cultural rules and expectations...[438]

It is perhaps because of alcohol's ability to transform the mind for supranatural experiences that it is valuable in ancient cultures. Not just because of the labour involved in its production, but because of the social and ritual 'work' alcohol itself does: '[alcohol's] constituent ingredients acquire value through culinary transformation and the process of consumption in the context of social ritual rather than in accumulation.'[439] Thus, the quantity of grapes or grain owned is of little importance socially unless it can be utilised in activities deemed to be socially valuable, which are rituals on both small and large scales. Another indicator of alcohol's central importance in ancient southwest Asia is the

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[437] For example, Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 220-1, 232-7; Louise Steel, 'A Goodly Feast... A Cup of Mellow Wine: Feasting in Bronze Age Cyprus', *Hesperia* 73 (2004), 281-300; Hamilakis, 'Food Technologies', 44, 49; Yannis Hamilakis, 'The Anthropology Of Food And Drink Consumption And Aegean Archaeology' in Sarah J. Vaughan and William D. E. Coulson eds. *Palaeodiet in the Aegean* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2000), 58-9; Michael Dietler, 'Driven By Drink: The Role Of Drinking In The Political Economy And The Case Of Early Iron Age France', *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 9 (1990), 352-406.

[438] Dietler and Ingrid Herbich, 'Liquid Material Culture', 398.

[439] Michael Dietler, 'Consumption, agency, and cultural entanglement: theoretical implications of a Mediterranean colonial encounter' in James G. Cusick ed. *Studies In Culture Contact: Interaction, Culture Change and Archaeology* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University, 1998), 303.

likelihood that cereals were originally domesticated because of increasing demands for beer.[440]

Focusing on the roles of alcohol in ritual is important for understanding the religious worlds of ancient cultures, as has been noted:

> …psychoactive substances can be seen as integral to the constitution of culture. They have been fundamental to the nature of sociality and an active element in the construction of religious experience, gender categories and the rituals of social life. No ethnographic or culture-historical account is complete without a consideration of these matters.[441]

Psychoactive substances are seen to be an 'active element in the construction of religious experience' because the mind-alteration and shifts in perception and emotion may be interpreted through the lens of the divine. Such phenomena are known as altered states of consciousness (ASCs) and have been a focus in recent scholarship on ritual in Bronze Age Cyprus by David Collard.[442] He defines ASCs as 'mental states recognized by an individual as a noticeable deviation, in terms of subjective experience of psychological functioning, from the cognitive norms of that individual during waking, alert consciousness.'[443] In this scholarship, the psychoactive substances opium and alcohol are researched as items consumed to induce ASCs for ritual purposes, specifically for providing 'a means of entering or interacting with the supernatural world and its inhabitants'.[444] The use of hemp, mushrooms and other psychoactive plants

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[440] Brian Hayden, Neil Canuel and Jennifer Shanse, 'What Was Brewing in the Natufian? An Archaeological Assessment of Brewing Technology in the Epipaleolithic', *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 20 (2013), 142.
[441] Andrew Sherratt, 'Alcohol and Its Alternatives: Symbol and Substance in Pre-Industrial Cultures' in Jordan Goodman, Paul E. Lovejoy and Andrew Sherratt eds. *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology* (London: Routledge, 1995), 34.
[442] David Collard, *Altered States of Consciousness and Ritual in late Bronze Age Cyprus*, Unpublished PhD (University of Nottingham, 2011); David Collard, 'The Materiality of Ecstatic Ritual: Altered States of Consciousness and Ritual in Late Bronze Age Cyprus' in Louise Steel and Katharina Zinn, eds. *Exploring the Materiality of Food 'Stuffs': Transformations, Symbolic Consumption and Embodiments* (London: Routledge, 2016), 226-247; David Collard, 'Drinking with the Dead: Psychoactive Consumption in Cypriote Bronze Age Mortuary Ritual' in David Collard, Jim Morris and Elisa Perego eds. *Food and Drink in Archaeology 3* (Totnes: Prospect Books, 2012), 23-32.
[443] Collard, 'The Materiality of Ecstatic Ritual', 226.
[444] Collard, 'The Materiality of Ecstatic Ritual', 227.

has also been discussed as possible substances used to induce supranatural experiences in early southwest Asian cultures.[445] A similar suggestion has been made by Tim Unwin in regard to wine and its role in religion: 'Wine with its ability to intoxicate and engender a sense of "otherworldliness" provided a means by which people could actually come into contact with the gods.'[446] In discussing the Ugaritic text in which the god El gets drunk in the *marzēaḥ* (discussed below), Nicolas Wyatt has also proposed the use of alcohol in cultic ritual:

> We tend to think of intoxication as a purely secular and disreputable matter. To the ancients the effects of alcohol were understood to be a form of divine possession, and the consumption of copious draughts of wine was an important feature of cultic as well as social activity.[447]

While it may be difficult to find explicit examples in the biblical text which portray the use of alcohol to contact the divine, the ritual associations of alcoholic beverages are undeniable, as shall be demonstrated. Like food, alcohol is entangled in dependencies and dependences between the humans who produce it and the deities to whom they offer it. The fact that alcohol has mind-altering effects, however, has to be more than simply acknowledged in scholarly discussion or else we run the risk of underestimating its agency and socio-religious value. Such issues must be taken into account in order to gauge why consumption is regulated and restricted in certain contexts, it is most imperative to avoid imposing modern preferences which foreground anxieties about lack of control. Perhaps it is modern attitudes towards inebriation that have led to the lack of attention on alcohol in ritual:

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[445] Diana Stein, 'The Role of Stimulants in Early Near Eastern Society: Insight through Artifacts and Texts' in Yağmur Heffron, Adam Stone, and Martin Worthington eds. *At the Dawn of History: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of J.N. Postgate* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 507-33.
[446] Tim Unwin, *Wine and the Vine: An Historical Geography of Viticulture* (London: Routledge, 1991), 49.
[447] Nicolas Wyatt, *Religious texts from Ugarit,* 2nd ed. (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 404. See also 412 n.43.

> …the lack of consideration for the consumptive context of these substances and the resulting ASCs implies assumptions that these topics are not worthy of consideration. This most likely reflects modern notions which characterise psychoactive consumption as degenerate or amoral behaviour which has detrimental effects on their consumers and society as a whole.[448]

What I am trying to emphasise is that scholars cannot continue to talk about alcohol and on the one hand rail against drunkenness as an immoral behaviour, but on the other abstain from discussing the bodily sensations it effects that were perceived to be beneficial to the religious lives of its consumers. The very reason alcohol has continued to be produced and consumed for thousands of years cross-culturally is because the corporeal experience of drunkenness can be powerful, pleasurable and peculiar. It is not just another foodstuff to be included in an overview of ancient Israelite and Judahite diet, it deserves more attention than this. The embodied experience of inebriation has to be discussed in order to understand why inebriation and associated behaviours may be regarded as normative, deviant, or hold a position of ambiguity. Before moving on to discussing specific alcoholic beverages and their production I wish to end this section with the following reflection on intoxication in religious literature:

> I accept the truth of metaphor, expressed in the common phrase 'spiritual intoxication' as it modulates back into 'spiritual' intoxication, and imagine that heaven was originally constructed out of our drunkenness. Rather than intoxication being used to characterize either heaven or ecstasy, ecstasy and heaven were originally carved out of the experience of intoxication.[449]

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[448] Collard, *Altered States of Consciousness*, 71.
[449] Marty Roth, *Drunk the Night Before: An Anatomy of Intoxication* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 78.

3.3 Brewing Beer in ancient Israel and Judah

To some it may come as a surprise to see beer discussed as a beverage consumed by ancient Israelites and Judahites. In most English translations of the Hebrew Bible, the word for beer, שׁכר, is translated as 'strong drink', obscuring the specific beverage from view. I discuss further the lack of attention paid to beer in biblical scholarship in a separate section below, but here I will address the evidence for beer brewing as a widespread activity across ancient Israel and Judah.

The work of Jennie Ebeling and Michael Homan has been foundational for establishing the prevalence of beer in ancient Israel and Judah.[450] Based on philological information there is a strong case to be made for beer's presence in biblical texts. שׁכר occurs 23 times in the Hebrew Bible and Michael Homan has pointed out that while it is usually translated as 'strong drink,' it is cognate with the Akkadian word for beer, *šikaru.*[451] The root שׁכר means 'become drunk' in Hebrew, and Homan also highlights the fact that cognates of this root were synonymous with intoxication in surrounding cultures' languages such as Ugaritic (*škr*), Akkadian (*šikaru)*, Aramaic (*šēkār)*, Arabic (*sakira*) and Hebrew as well as Egyptian's *ḥnq[t]*. This multitude of cognates from cultures in which widespread beer consumption is unquestionable testifies to the extent and scale of beer's use as an intoxicant.[452] It would thus be surprising if Israel and Judah were an anomaly. In biblical texts שׁכר is paired with wine in 20 of the 23 total occurrences, and this pairing is also attested in the famous Ashkelon ostraca inscriptions, which demonstrates that these are two different, though both alcoholic, substances.[453] On philological grounds alone, it is convincing that beer was consumed in ancient Israel and Judah, so I shall now move to

[450] Michael M. Homan, 'Beer, Barley and שׁכר in the Hebrew Bible' in Richard E. Friedman and William H.C. Propp eds. *Le David Maskil: A Birthday Tribute for David Noel Freedman* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 25-38; Jennie R. Ebeling, 'The Contribution of Archaeology to the Study of Women in Biblical Times: Two Case Studies', *Review and Expositor* 106 (2009), 383-98; Jennie R. Ebeling and Michael M. Homan, 'Baking and Brewing Beer in the Israelite Household: A Study of Women's Cooking Technology' in B. A. Nakhai ed. *The World of Women in the Ancient and Classical Near East* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2008), 45-62.
[451] Homan, 'Beer, Barley and שׁכר', 29.
[452] Homan, 'Beer, Barley and שׁכר,' 29.
[453] Homan, 'Beer, Barley and שׁכר,' 30.

examine the beer brewing production sequence and incorporate the evidence from material culture.

At first blush, it may appear that there is little archaeological evidence to attest to the production and consumption of beer in ancient Israel and Judah by comparison to wine production. Wine, which is discussed below, utilised large stone or plastered installations for the processing of grapes known as treading vats or presses. Beer brewing, on the other hand, did not require such large structures. It thus can easily become invisible in the archaeological record.

Beer thus could be brewed in the home, as such, brewing was likely the domain of women.[454] As discussed above, grains such as wheat and barley could be stored in large quantities for long periods of time in both communal structures as well as in the home. This local storage was necessary because of the daily access to grain required in order that the women could maintain near-continuous grinding required for bread flour. Beer was brewed from either wheat or barley, but it is likely that barley was preferred: it produced less viscous beer than other grains, and required the least stirring or agitation in multiple stages of the brewing process.[455] Despite this, either grain could have been used and access to either wheat or barley would have been dependent on the local climate and soil conditions as well as the success of recent harvests. Along with the responsibility of preparing and providing bread for the household, women were responsible for the storing and rationing of grain for household consumption; women were in effect the ‘gatekeepers’ of the larders.[456] The decision to divert grain supplies from bread making to beer brewing would likely have fallen to women. In this way women had agency because of their relationship with grain and beer which impacted household negotiations; thus such items construct and inculcate identity and status.

[454] Ebeling, ‘The Contribution of Archaeology to the Study of Women’, 388-91; Ebeling and Homan, ‘Baking and Brewing Beer in the Israelite Household’, 45-62.
[455] Brian Hayden et al. ‘What Was Brewing in the Natufian?’, 123.
[456] For an ethnographic parallel see Jon Holtzman, ‘The Food of Elders, the "Ration" of Women: Brewing, Gender, and Domestic Processes among the Samburu of Northern Kenya’, *American Anthropologist* (2001), 1045.

There are two possible methods for brewing barley and wheat beers in an ancient context. Microscopic analysis of residues left on pottery from New Kingdom Egyptian contexts (c. 16th – 11th centuries BCE) have allowed archaeologists to establish one of the beer brewing processes used from this time.[457] After retrieving the required grain from the household stores, the first step in the beer brewing process was for the woman to moisten the grains, still in their husks, in ceramic jars, on mats, or in shallow basins. This process allowed the grain to start sprouting which would take a number of days. Sprouting, also known as germination, produces enzymes (amylases), which turn starch into sugars. After the sprouting, the brewer would take the grains outside to allow them to dry out in the sun. She would then grind these dried sprouted grains down into a coarse powder: malt.[458] During the days when the grains are sprouting, the brewer may also have ground another batch of grain from the supplies and cooked the resulting course flour in water. She could then mix these cooked, ground grains with the malt, which had already been mixed with water into a paste. Adding these extra cooked grains would have provided additional access to starches for the enzymes, amylase, to process, providing more sugars for the yeast to consume. [459] The brewer would then set this mixture over a fire or cooking installation allowing it to heat up while stirring (if wheat was being used, barley did not require such agitation).[460] This process (known as mashing) allowed the enzymes (amylases) to convert starches in the grain to sugars (maltose) which are later used by yeast for alcohol production.[461] Delwen Samuel comments:

> Although the ancient Egyptians would not have been aware of the biochemical basis for the success of such a method, this procedure is a very good way of converting starch to sugars

[457] Delwen Samuel, 'Archaeology of Ancient Egyptian Beer', *Journal of the American Society of Brewing Chemists* 54 (1996), 5.
[458] Delwen Samuel, 'Brewing and Baking' in P.T. Nicholson and I. Shaw eds. *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 553; Justin Jennings, Kathleen L. Antrobus, Sam J. Atencio, Erin Glavich, Rebecca Johnson, German Loffler and Christine Luu,'"Drinking Beer in a Blissful Mood" Alcohol Production, Operational Chains, and Feasting in the Ancient World', *Current Anthropology* 46 (2005), 279; Hayden et. al., 'What Was Brewing in the Natufian?', 104-5.
[459] Samuel, 'Brewing and Baking,' 555; Jennings et. al. "Drinking Beer in a Blissful Mood', 279.
[460] Hayden et. al., 'What Was Brewing in the Natufian?', 123.
[461] Samuel, 'Brewing and Baking', 553; Hayden et. al., 'What Was Brewing in the Natufian?', 105.

> without precise controls on volumes of ingredients and temperature. The batch of heated grain would contain very little amylase, because cooking would have destroyed the enzymes. If the cooked cereal was unsprouted, there would have been little amylase in any case. The starch, however, would be partially or completely dispersed out of the granules. Because the molecules of starch were no longer tightly packed together, they would be much more susceptible to enzyme attack.[462]

Effective methods for brewing beer would have been developed over time through trial and error, fortuitous accidents, and the tweaking of traditional methods even though the biochemical interactions of enzymes, yeasts, carbon dioxide, or any other molecule involved in this reaction that produces ethanol, were unknown. Indeed, it is easy enough to see how an early form of beer could have accidentally come into being just from making a gruel or porridge from grains that had already begun to sprout.[463]

The next step a woman would then take to brew beer would be to sieve the liquid to remove large pieces of grain and husk. These solids may have then been eaten as the substance would have had a sweet caramel taste and been rich in starch and sugars, both of which are beneficial to the human diet.[464] Alternatively, this mixture could have been mixed with water and used to make a weaker beer; either way, it was a valued foodstuff and was not wasted.[465] The strained liquid, now in ceramic jars (and called 'wort' in modern brewing language), would begin fermenting, triggered by the residual yeast in the jar walls from the last brew of beer.[466] If a new jar was being used, however, fruit or honey which naturally contain yeast could have been added, or natural airborne yeasts could have been caught in it when left outside.[467] Fermentation stoppers, which have previously been confused for loom weights, could have been used for small jars during the fermentation stage of beer brewing. Indeed, they have

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[462] Samuel, 'Brewing and Baking', 554.
[463] Hayden et. al., 'What Was Brewing in the Natufian?', 115; Solomon H. Katz and Fritz Maytag, 'Brewing an ancient beer', *Archaeology* 44 (1991), 27.
[464] Samuel, 'Brewing and Baking', 555.
[465] Samuel, 'Brewing and Baking', 555.
[466] Jennings et. al. "Drinking Beer in a Blissful Mood', 280; Samuel, 'Brewing and Baking', 556.
[467] Hayden et. al., 'What Was Brewing in the Natufian?', 108.

been found in situ, sitting in jar mouths, at Tell el-Hammah, Israel which contain carbonised crushed wheat, indicating beer was contained in these jars.[468]

Lids would have been required for large jars as yeast required anaerobic conditions to consume sugars and convert them into carbon dioxide and ethanol (alcohol), rather than just reproducing. Brian Hayden and colleagues comment on the way lids may have taken on a ritual status, as if in some way causing the magical transformation into beer: '…if a lid was used to protect the fermentation, this would also become exposed to a large amount of yeast. The lid could have been carefully, even ritually, stored and reused time and again to inoculate brew after brew.'[469] This is not to say the beer jar lids would have been seen as supernatural themselves, but that they may have been viewed as entangled with the deities who bestowed blessings of a successful brew for the household; they were contributors to the performance of divine power. Patrick McGovern has also suggested that the phenomenon of fermentation would likely have looked magical to humans:

> The build-up of gas inside the container might have caused the vessel to shake and roll back and forth. This unexplained movement might have suggested that an outside agency or supernatural force was at work, a phenomenon further reinforced by the mind-altering effects when they drank the finished product.[470]

The ritual nature of beer is most clearly demonstrated by the Sumerian Hymn to Ninkasi, which dates from about 1800 BCE and is known from tablets found at Nippur, Sippar, and Larsa.[471] Ninkasi was the goddess of beer brewing, one of the few professions that had a female deity as its patron and guardian,[472] and her hymn poetically describes an alternative method for brewing beer:

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[468] Michael M. Homan, 'Beer and Its Drinkers: An Ancient Near Eastern Love Story', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67 (2000), 91.
[469] Hayden et. al., 'What Was Brewing in the Natufian?', 109.
[470] Patrick E. McGovern, *Ancient Brews: Rediscovered and Re-created* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2017), 16.
[471] Katz and Maytag, 'Brewing an ancient beer', 26.
[472] Ian S. Hornsey, *A History of Beer and Brewing* (Cambridge: Royal Society of Chemistry, 2003), 88. The Egyptians also had a goddess, Hathor, who was associated with beer

You are the one who handles the dough,
[and] with a big shovel,
Mixing in a pit, the bappir with sweet aromatics,

You are the one who bakes the bappir
in the big oven,
Puts in order the piles of hulled grains,

You are the one who waters the malt
set on the ground,
The noble dogs keep away even the potentates,

Ninkasi, you are the one who soaks
the malt in a jar
The waves rise, the waves fall.

You are the one who spreads the cooked
mash on large reed mats,
Coolness overcomes.

You are the one who holds with both hands
the great sweet wort,
Brewing [it] with honey and wine

Ninkasi, the filtering vat,
which makes a pleasant sound,
You place appropriately on [top of]
a large collector vat.

Ninkasi, you are the one who pours out the
filtered beer of the collector vat,
It is [like] the onrush of

production, she was known as the ‘inventress of brewing,’ ‘the mistress of intoxication,’ and her temple was ‘the place of drunkenness,’ see Hornsey, *Beer and Brewing,* 64.

Tigris and Euphrates.[473]

This poem is remarkable because it not only provides details concerning the physical process of making beer but it also demonstrates the value and ritual associations of beer. What is different in the process described in this poem to the sequence of production discussed above from New Kingdom Egypt is the use of *bappir* as a key ingredient. It has been suggested that this Mesopotamian process involved making bread loaves out of ground malted grains which were then lightly baked.[474] This bread could then be stored or used immediately by breaking it up, mashing it with water, and then passed through a sieve.[475] The use of this poetic text as a guide to the ancient beer making process is not without difficulties and caution has been urged in understanding what ingredients are being referred to and whether the descriptive steps are chronological:

> Such an interpretation of the Hymn to Ninkasi as representing the steps of the brewing process is hardly possible without applying modern knowledge of the chemistry of brewing. Given that many passages of the text are obscure, the translation is influenced to a considerable extent by knowledge about modern brewing technology.[476]

Thus, it is difficult to say what brewing method is really being described in the Hymn to Ninkasi, and until residue analysis is carried out on Mesopotamian beer vessels little certainty can be had. Later evidence, however, does attest to the use of bread in beer making. For example, the Egyptian Alchemist Zosimus of Panopolis who lived around the end of the third century or beginning of the fourth century CE documents bread as a key ingredient in beer.[477] Also, a more

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[473] Abbreviated verses 3-10 of the Hymn to Ninkasi, translated by Miguel Civil, 'A Hymn to the Beer Goddess and Drinking Song' in R. D. Biggs and J. A. Brinkman eds. *Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 67-89.
[474] Samuel Delwen, 'Comment' in Jennings et. al. "Drinking Beer in a Blissful Mood', 294.
[475] Jennings et. al. "Drinking Beer in a Blissful Mood', 280; Hayden et. al., 'What Was Brewing in the Natufian?', 106.
[476] Peter Damerow, 'Sumerian beer: the origins of brewing technology in ancient Mesopotamia', *Cuneiform Digital Library Journal* 2 (2012), 15.
[477] Hornsey, *Beer and Brewing*, 48-9.

modern, but similar, kind of Egyptian beer called *bouza* is brewed using bread, which has helped to some extent in learning about this brewing process.[478] Michael Homan argues that there is a reference to the bread method being used in Eccl 11:1-2:[479] 'Throw your bread upon the face of the water because in many days you will acquire it. Give a serving to seven and also to eight, because you do not know what evil will be upon the land.' This echoes the message in Eccl 9:7-10: 'Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart…for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.' It is therefore possible that Ecclesiastes' reference to throwing bread on water indexes the use of bread in beer brewing and thus parallels the act of drinking in the face of death.

Regardless of whether bread was utilised as an ingredient in beer brewing, the two processes of bread baking and beer brewing were intimately entangled. In Egyptian iconographic depictions of beer brewing the associated process of baking bread is also depicted, signalling that these two activities were not only associated with each other in terms of sharing the same ingredients but also spatially, in that the two processes were carried out in the same professional or domestic space. While this evidence comes from a different time period and geographic location to ancient Israel and Judah, the information provided is pertinent because the climate and resources utilised are sufficiently similar to suggest that serious deviation in beer production methods is unlikely. Egyptian iconographic evidence is extremely valuable for illustrating tasks like food production which are frequently not the focus of attention in Hebrew Bible texts. In the Old Kingdom tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep there is a detailed relief presenting the various stages of beer production, including milling, malting, making bread, mashing, and fermentation.[480] Another informative example comes from the tomb of Ty who was an important official in the Fifth Dynasty (2500 BCE); again the depiction shows grains being processed into bread alongside beer brewing.[481] A workshop which appears to have been used for the purpose of beer brewing has been excavated at Tel Goren in Ein Gedi,

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[478] Jeremy Geller, 'Bread and Beer in Fourth-Millennium Egypt', *Food and Foodways* 5 (1993), 258.
[479] Michael M. Homan, 'Beer Production by Throwing Bread into Water: A New Interpretation of Qoh. XI 1-2', *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002), 275-278.
[480] See figure 2.5 in Hornsey, *Beer and Brewing,* 59.
[481] See figure 2.3 in Hornsey, *Beer and Brewing,* 54.

Israel dating to the late Iron IIC period.[482] The remains there included large jars for storing grain with holes in the bottom that are alike to grain jars pictured in the drawings from the tomb of Ty.[483] There were also other utensils used for stages in the beer brewing process such as grinding implements and perforated clay balls which are likely fermentation stoppers.[484] Such evidence may attest to larger scale beer production than just in households alone.

There have also been wooden models found in tombs such as the one of Meketra at Thebes (11th Dynasty). Here, a model depicting a palace or temple brewery and bakery strongly suggests the two activities were carried out simultaneously. It includes ovens, dough vats, bread moulds, beer jars, fermentation jars as well as model men and women grinding grains and mashing bread.[485] Additionally, there is a papyrus with 20 mathematical problems written out on it, 11 of which are about bread, beer and grain. One, for example, asks the solver to work out how many jugs of beer or loaves of bread can be made from a certain amount of grain.[486] This also suggests that the associations between beer and bread making were prominent in the minds of the Egyptians, at least on an elite level.

Archaeological structures dating to the end of the Predynastic period (i.e. prior to 3150 BCE) have been excavated that appear to have served both baking and brewing functions. At the first, Hierakonpolis, remains of a bread oven and fragments from bread moulds were found as well as vats which had an organic black, deposit or residue on the inside which was tested and found to be the by-product of the fermentation process of both barley and wheat.[487] Geller has also identified the vats found at Abydos, the second site, as fermentation vats due to the reports remarking on the same black residue inside them even though they were not identified as such at the time of excavation.[488] The same interpretation

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[482] Gideon Hadas, 'Beer Barrels From Tel Goren, Ein Gedi', *Revue Biblique* 111 (2004), 409.
[483] Hadas, 'Beer Barrels', 412.
[484] Hadas, 'Beer Barrels', 409.
[485] See figure 61.2 in Barry J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilisation*, (London: Routledge, 1989), 173. For further iconographic representations of brewing and baking see Samuel, 'Brewing and Baking', 557-8. Larger bakery/breweries in temples and palaces for example likely employed both men and women.
[486] Charles F. Nims, 'The Bread and Beer Problems of the Moscow Mathematical Papyrus', *Egypt Exploration Society* 44 (1958), 56-65.
[487] Geller, 'Bread and Beer in Fourth-Millennium Egypt', 260-261.
[488] Geller, 'Bread and Beer in Fourth-Millennium Egypt', 262; Samuel, 'Brewing and Baking,' 539-40.

is also applied by Geller to the vats in Mahasna and Ballas which date to the same period. In addition there is another Egyptian bakery/brewery at 'En Besor in the Negev, dating from the time of the First Dynasty (Early Bronze Age). Excavators there found baking moulds and other baking equipment adjacent to a basin likely used for brewing.[489] Two other Egyptian sites, Deir el-Medina and the Amarna Worker's Village, which date to the New Kingdom period (c. 16th – 11th centuries BCE), also attest to baking and brewing simultaneously.

In Mesopotamia, three bakery/brewery complexes have been found, including one at Lagash, which contained brewing vats and an inscription including the word *bappir.*[490] Two others have been found in Syria, one from the 15th Dynasty in Tell Hadidi where an oven, grain, grinding stones, a strainer and vessels with and without perforations were found.[491] The other, slightly smaller scale brewery/bakery was found at Selenkahiye and dates from the early Bronze III period. An oven, fermenting vessel and drainage basin were found there.[492] It is possible that these bakeries/breweries were attached to taverns where these products could be sold.

Some Mesopotamian texts suggest beer was predominantly related to women. In the Code of Hammurabi (c. 1792–1750 BCE) there are specific laws (laws 108-111) about 'female tavern owners', a feminine noun that suggests that brewers were usually women.[493] In the Epic of Gilgamesh it is a tavern-keeper goddess who teaches the animalistic Enkidu how to be 'a man' by feeding him bread and beer. Not only does this demonstrate the idea that bread and beer were seen as the cornerstones of civilisation but also that they are primarily associated with, and produced by, women. It may be the case that by producing beer and bread the author is indexing the woman's femininity, while at the same time Enkidu's masculinity is thereby indexed by his reception and consumption of these items. In the iconographic reliefs and models mentioned above depicting beer brewing, women are the predominant actors in those scenes. It

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[489] Geller, 'Bread and Beer in Fourth-Millennium Egypt', 263; Ram Gophna and Dan Gazit, 'The First Dynasty Egyptian Residency at 'En Besor', *Tel Aviv* 12 (1984), 12-13.
[490] Hornsey, *Beer and Brewing,* 79.
[491] Marie-Henriette Gates, 'Dialogues between Ancient near Eastern Texts and the Archaeological Record: Test Cases from Bronze Age Syria', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (1988), 66-67.
[492] Hornsey, *Beer and Brewing,* 80.
[493] See translation by Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1997), 101-2.

would seem that beer brewing and bread baking were associated with women cross-culturally, likely because both activities were socio-spatially domestic in nature.

In ethnographies from similar, traditional agrarian based cultures in other geographic locations, women also tend to be the primary beer brewers. The Karimojong women of Uganda live in a similarly stressful agropastoral environment to the ancient Israelites and Judahites in that famine is frequently experienced and dairy and grain products are the main food sources. Their main grain, sorghum, is also turned into beer which is used in rituals and has led to a local saying that 'beer is the cattle of women.' Just as cattle are used by men for ritual, nutrition and their social and economic values, beer for women hold the same status and functions.[494] Brewing beer for the Maguzawa women of Nigeria is described as their 'major craft;' 63% of the 116 women interviewed brewed beer. [495] In Mathare Valley, Kenya, 75% of women brew beer and sell it from the home because it is a means of income that allows them to continue child-care responsibilities.[496] The fact that women have been able to sell their beer demonstrates the social value of beer, even though beer likely was not sold in this way in ancient Israel and Judah. Many other ethnographies attest to the phenomenon of beer brewing being predominantly carried out by women.[497] The main reason for this activity being so associated with women is due to the fact that the brewing process can be fit in around other domestic activities very easily: stored grain is always available in the home so trips out of the village are not necessary, and there is no specialist equipment required, only large jars or containers.[498] In Benin, West Africa, it has been noted that the brewing area is

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[494] Kelsey Needham Dancause, Helen A. Akol, Sandra J. Gray, 'Beer is the Cattle of Women: Sorghum Beer Commercialization and Dietary Intake of Agropastoral Families in Karamoja, Uganda', *Social Science and Medicine* 10 (2010), 1123.
[495] Jerome H. Barkow, 'Hausa Women and Islam', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 6 (1972), 325.
[496] Mari H. Clark, 'Woman-headed Households and Poverty: Insights from Kenya', *Signs* 10 (1984), 349, 351.
[497] Emory M. Roe, 'Who Brews Traditional Beer in Rural Botswana? A review of the Literature and Policy Analysis', *Botswana Notes and Records* (1981), 46; George Chauncey Jr., 'The locus of reproduction: women's labour in the Zambian Copperbelt, 1927–1953*', Journal of Southern African Studies* 7 (1981), 144-5; Kate Crehan, 'Women and development in North Western Zambia: from producer to housewife', *Review of African Political Economy* 10 (1983), 55-6, 62; David Hirschmann & Megan Vaughan, 'Food production and income generation in a matrilineal society: rural women in Zomba, Malawi' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 10 (1983) 86-99; Michael McCall, 'Rural brewing, exclusion, and development policymaking', *Gender & Development* 4 (1996), 30.
[498] Crehan, 'Women and development', 62.

situated next to the main kitchen, just as beer brewing areas in the ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia were near breadmaking areas, and daughters will help their mothers with the different stages of beer brewing.[499]

3.4 The Socio-Ritual Roles of Beer

Both beer and bread inculcate and maintain the status and agency of the women of the household who prepare them, and this labour entangles women into the social network of other human and non-human members of the household. The beer and bread are consumed by other family members, offered to deities who participate in daily meals, and they are products of the grain that was grown in the fields ploughed by the cow. The cow, later in life, would likely be sacrificed for meat by a male, thereby linking both meat and beer to multiple human and non-human members of the household. Beer is thus also entangled in the ancient Israelite and Judahite household.

In beer production, malting grain increases its caloric value so it would have made the most of a farmer's grain yield in terms of the physiological benefits:[500]

> …individuals and groups who consumed beer were better nourished than those who consumed wheat and barley as gruel or who ignored these wild resources. Beer would have had sustaining powers well beyond any other food in their diet except animal proteins. In biological terms beer drinkers would have had a 'selective advantage' in the form of improved health for themselves and ultimately for their offspring.[501]

Michael Dietler has estimated that in traditional communities beer consumption at feasts contributes 20-30% of the total calories consumed annually by

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[499] Polycarpe A.P. Kayodé, Joseph Hounhouigan, Martinus J.R. Nout and Anke Niehof, 'Household production of sorghum beer in Benin: technological and socio-economic aspects', *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 31 (2007), 260.
[500] Geller, 'Bread and Beer in Fourth-Millennium Egypt', 259; Homan, 'Beer and Its Drinkers,' 84; Robert I. Curtis, *Ancient Food Technology*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 219.
[501] Solomon H. Katz and Mary M. Voigt, 'Bread and Beer: The Early Use of Cereals in the Human Diet', *Expedition* 28 (1986), 27.

individuals.[502] Ancient beer would only have been about 2-4% alcohol,[503] but even this much alcohol would have made it safer to drink than water by killing harmful microorganisms.[504] Drinking beer in this way, as a safer, nutritious, accessible and cost effective liquid, may seem difficult to understand in modern Western contexts in which beer is consumed for pleasure and intoxication. But the functional benefits of beer have been appreciated cross-culturally: in medieval England children would be given beer to drink at both breakfast and dinner.[505] Similarly, children drink beer in other agro-pastoral contexts such as Uganda.[506] It is thus likely that beer was consumed on a daily basis across all mealtimes as a nutritious foodstuff and as a main source of liquid for hydration.

Iconographic depictions of beer drinking on cylinder seals show that straws would have been used, allowing multiple people to drink from one large jar. These images have been found in Mesopotamia and Egypt[507] but we also have a cylinder seal from Gaza, dated to 1900-1750 BCE, which depicts two women drinking from a jar with straws.[508] Attached to the straws were filters made from metal or bone, which prevented husks and other grain particles from being consumed. Some bone tips, unlike the reed straws, have been found in archaeological excavations in Israel/Palestine in Middle Bronze through to Iron Age contexts, specifically in Gesher, Sasa, Kabri, Tel El-Ajjul, Gezer, Tel Qiri and Megiddo.[509] While metal straw tips were likely to have been high-status objects, the bone versions would have been accessible to any Israelite or Judahite living in a pastoral context who would only have needed to whittle a bone such as a tibia shaft from a small goat or

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[502] Michael Dietler, 'Comment' in Jennings et. al. "Drinking Beer in a Blissful Mood', 291; Michael Dietler, 'Theorizing the feast: rituals of consumption, commensal politics, and power in African contexts' in Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden eds. *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2001), 81-2.
[503] Hayden et. al., 'What Was Brewing in the Natufian?',104.
[504] Ebeling, 'The Contribution of Archaeology,' 390; Homan, 'Beer and Its Drinkers,' 84.
[505] Judith M. Bennet, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 17.
[506] Kelsey Needham Dancause, Helen A. Akol and Sandra J. Gray, 'Beer is the Cattle of Women: Sorghum Beer Commercialization and Dietary Intake of Agropastoral Families in Karamoja, Uganda', *Social Science and Medicine* 10 (2010), 1125.
[507] See plates I and II in Louis F. Hartman and A. L. Oppenheim, *On Beer and Brewing Techniques in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Baltimore: American Oriental Society, 1950); See also examples from Old Babylonia and the 18th Dynasty Egypt in Homan, 'Beer and Its Drinkers,' 93.
[508] Barbara Parker, 'Cylinder Seals from Palestine' *Iraq* 8 (1949), pl. 9:2.
[509] Aren M. Maeir and Yosef Garfinkel, 'Bone and Metal Straw-tip Beer-strainers from the Ancient Near East', *Levant* XXIV (1991), 218-219.

sheep.[510] That multiple people are depicted consuming beer highlights the highly social nature of drinking. In addition, the fact that somebody took the time to make such a seal demonstrates the appreciated and acknowledged social value such consumption activities had. Many depictions of beer consumption from Mesopotamian, Babylonian and Sumerian art portray acts of sexual intercourse occurring while beer is sucked through straws. Interestingly, it is always the female who is drinking from the beer while the male penetrates her from behind.[511] This may suggest another link between beer and women, this time concerning its consumption rather than production. These images will be further explored in Chapter 5, in which the close association of sex and alcohol will be discussed.

As beer would turn sour within a matter of days it was less apt for trade and widespread distribution compared to wine.[512] Because beer could be made at any time due to the long-life of grains in storage, beer could be brewed frequently in small amounts for daily use and larger quantities for feasts. Multiple households may have all brewed extra beer to contribute for the rest of the community at agricultural harvest festivals for example.[513] While we have little textual evidence for the use of beer in feasts in ancient Israel and Judah, comparative ancient southwest Asian texts provide some information about royal beer consumption. In Neo-Assyria it appears that just as much beer was drunk as wine at royal banquets. In the inscription known as the Banquet Stele of Ashurnasirpal II (911-612 BCE), 10,000 jars of beer are ordered along with 10,000 skins of wine for the gargantuan feast.[514] So beer and wine were desired in equally large measures even in royal contexts. In excavations at Nimrud a large cellar was found containing rows of jars for storing liquid and 11

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[510] Aren M. Maeir and Yosef Garfinkel, 'Bone and Metal Straw-tip Beer-strainers' 218.
[511] Julia Assante, *The Erotic Reliefs of Ancient Mesopotamia*, PhD Dissertation (Columbia: Columbia University, 2000), For 13 images of this scene see plates I-IV, 340-343.
[512] Jennings et. al. "Drinking Beer in a Blissful Mood', 281, see also the comment by François Sigaut on 294.
[513] The occasions for which feasts (involving the consumption of large quantities of alcohol) are well established and need not be repeated here. See for example Walsh, Fruit of the Vine, 209-239; Carol Meyers, 'Feast Days and Food Ways: Religious Dimensions of Household Life' in R. Albertz, B. A. Nakhai, S.M. Olyan, R. Schmitt eds. *Family and Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of Old Testament Studies, Archaeology, Epigraphy and Cultural Studies* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 230-235; Carol Meyers, 'The Function of Feasts: An Anthropological Perspective on Israelite Religious Festivals' in S. Olyan ed. *Social Theory and the Study of Israelite Religion* (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 147-151.
[514] James Bennett Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 253-4.

administrative tablets from the 8th Century BCE listing allocations of wine and *šikaru*, beer, for different people.[515] These people may have been guests at a feast in the Assyrian capital to which administrators and people of the court were invited, although the lists also include people like the queen, eunuchs, royal body guards, military personnel, cultic professionals, cup bearers, female singers, female palace personnel, leather workers, personnel of the stables, physicians, diviners, exorcists and bakers.[516] The Philistine city at Ashkelon appears to have had a winery, and ostraca were found there listing red wine and שׁכר. Despite this occurrence of beer Lawrence Stager has argued that the Philistines drank wine instead of beer:

> The ecology of Philistia, however, favors the production of grapes over barley. The sandy soils and warm, sunny climate of the coastal plain produced many palatable wines, ranging from the light varieties at Ashkelon to the heavier ones at Gaza. The winery at Ashkelon and similar contemporaneous wine presses recently excavated near Ashdod suggest that coastal Philistia was an important producer of wine both for local consumption and for export. Wine, not beer, was the beverage of choice. The 'beer-jugs' really served as carafes for wine.[517]

Stager seems to suggest that, despite there being epigraphic evidence for Ashkelon producing both beer and wine, instead Ashkelon only produced wine on the basis that the local area was able to produce good wine. However, as Homan has pointed out, barley grows well just 2km from Ashkelon, and it has been found at excavations in Bronze and Iron Age contexts at this site as well as on an ostracon which mentions the trade of cereals.[518] Therefore, this information plus the ostracon bearing the word שׁכר suggests that rather than the Philistines being only beer drinkers, or in the other extreme, only wine drinkers

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[515] K. V. Kinnier Wilson, *The Nimrud Wine Lists* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1972), 81; See also Frederick Mario Fales 'A Fresh Look at the Nimrud Wine Lists,' in Lucio Milano ed., *Drinking in Ancient Societies: History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near East*, (Padua, Italy: Sargon, 1994), 363 who disputes the idea that these lists demonstrate only wine distribution rather than both beer and wine.
[516] Fales 'A Fresh Look at the Nimrud Wine Lists', 371-80.
[517] Lawrence Stager, 'The Fury of Babylon: Ashkelon and the Archaeology of Destruction', *Biblical Archaeological Review* 22 (1996), 64, 68.
[518] Homan, 'Beer, Barley and שׁכר', 30 n.25; Frank Moore Cross, 'A Philistine Ostracon from Ashkelon', *Biblical Archaeological Review* 22 (1996), 64-65.

as Stager suggests, the Philistines likely produced both beer and wine. Here, Stager is an example of scholars who only seem to be able to view the ancient world in terms of dichotomies rather than accepting a more nuanced picture that includes the variety and diversity of reality. Unfortunately, this ostracon does not tell us who necessarily drank the beer or how far it was transported if it was traded at all. Beer may simply have been produced for locals or used as a form of wage for labourers as it was in Egypt and Mesopotamia.[519] Overall it seems likely that most ordinary ancient Israelites and Judahites consumed beer as their main alcoholic beverage, beer being easily made in the household and cost-effective. The lack of information about beer in royal elite contexts is likely due to the fact that wine was perceived as more prestigious, an issue explored further below.

Despite the lack of information on beer in royal feasts, we do have some biblical evidence of beer's use in ritual, both in elite and household contexts. For example, Numbers 28 in which Yahweh is offered שׁכר, beer:

> 3 And you shall say to them, this is the offering by fire that you shall offer to Yahweh: two male lambs a year old without blemish, daily, as a regular offering. 4 One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight … 7 Its drink offering shall be one-fourth of a hin for each lamb; in the sanctuary you shall pour out a drink offering (נסך) of beer (שׁכר) to Yahweh. 8 The other lamb you shall offer at twilight with a grain offering and its drink offering (נסכו) like the one in the morning [of beer]; you shall offer it as an offering by fire, a pleasing odour to Yahweh. 9 On the sabbath day: two male lambs a year old without blemish, and two-tenths of an ephah of choice flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, and its drink offering [of beer] 10 this is the

[519] Barry J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilisation* (London: Routledge, 1989), 124-28; Hans Neumann, 'Beer as a Means of Compensation for Work in Mesopotamia During the Ur III Period' in Lucio Milano ed. *Drinking in Ancient Societies: History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near East* (Padua, Italy: Sargon, 1994), 321-31.

> burnt offering for every sabbath, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering [of beer] (Num 28: 3-4, 7-10).[520]

In this set of instructions about the daily sacrifices to Yahweh it is beer which is poured out twice a day. A quarter of a hin is roughly equivalent to two pints, so on a normal day Yahweh was to be given almost four pints of beer to go with his roast lamb. On Shabbat, however, an additional two lambs were sacrificed along with their drink offering of two pints of beer each. This text therefore instructs that Yahweh should receive double the usual amount on Shabbat, nearly eight pints. As the overall quantity of the sacrifices increases from the daily sacrifice to the Shabbat sacrifice, so too do the monthly sacrifices increase both in quantity but also in quality. Instead of two lambs Yahweh is given two bulls, one ram and seven lambs whilst the drink offering is upgraded from beer to a staggering, 3.2 hins or, 24 pints of wine (vv. 11-15). Wine is only first introduced in v. 14, which means all the previous drinking offerings in the text following v. 7 are שׁכר.

Num 28:7-10 thus indicates that beer was perceived as an acceptable offering in elite Yahwistic ritual. It also suggests that if these rituals were carried out, which we cannot be certain about, the temple must have had access to large quantities of beer and thus may have had dedicated temple-brewers to prepare beer specifically for this purpose. Several biblical texts also suggest that priests consumed beer (Lev 10:9; Isa 28:7-8). As bread was also likely required for temple purposes, such as the Bread of the Presence (e.g. Exod 25:20; Num 4:7; 1 Sam 21:6), it is not unfeasible that a bakery/brewery may have been a part of the temple complex in Jerusalem. Yahweh's perceived consumption of beer thus attests to the way in which beer entangled humans, animals and deities. Deities were dependent on being offered beer and in return bestowed fertility on both the animals who ploughed the fields, and the fields themselves, resulting in successful harvests. Humans were thus dependent on their animals and the deities for the harvest and household members were dependent on women to brew beer. At the same time, women were dependent on multiple

[520] Note that the inclusion of 'of beer' in parentheses are my addition to clarify that this is the same substance referred to as in v. 7.

other household members and deities for their continued nourishment and survival. One of these deities may have been a goddess referred to as the Queen of Heaven.

The repeated remarks in Jeremiah (Jer. 7:18, 44:17, 44:18, 44:19, 44:25) about women making bread cakes for the Queen of Heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, a reference to goddess worship, hints at an aspect of women's ritual experience:[521]

> And the women said, 'Indeed we will go on making offerings to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out libations to her; do you think that we made cakes for her, marked with her image, and poured out libations to her without our husbands' being involved?' (Jer 44:19)

> The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the Queen of Heaven. (Jer 7:18)

Due to women's roles as bread bakers and beer brewers in ancient southwest Asian contexts it is most likely that these libations were of beer.[522] Susan Ackerman notes that this worship appears 'primarily to be family centred' and may have involved the leadership of women as 'household managers'.[523] The fact that multiple members of the household appear to be involved in the worship of the Queen of Heaven demonstrates how bread and beer connect the divine and non-divine members in the household network. Without these foodstuffs the identities and statuses of the women, men, deities and indeed even the children, would not be maintained. The women especially appear to have agency by petitioning the Queen of Heaven for the security and wellbeing

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[521] Ebeling, *Women's Lives*, 76-8; For further information about the worship of the Queen of Heaven see S. Ackerman, '"And the Women Knead Dough": The Worship of the Queen of Heaven in Sixth-Century Judah' in A. Bach ed. *Women in the Hebrew Bible* (London: Routledge, 1999), 21-31; C. Houtman, 'Queen of Heaven' in K. Van der Toorn, B. Becking and P. W. van der Horst eds. *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* 2nd Ed. (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1999), 678-80.
[522] Ebeling and Homan, 'Baking and Brewing Beer in the Israelite Household', 51-2.
[523] Susan Ackerman, 'Queen of Heaven,' in C. Meyers ed. *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books and the New Testament* 2nd Ed. (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2001), 539.

of their households. But it is the beer and bread cakes which grant women this role and were thought to cause the deity to be moved and bring security. Thus, they have agency through social impact. Indeed, it is remarkable that by marking the bread cakes with the image of the Queen of Heaven, women are actually creating cult images of the goddess. Women's involvement in enabling the family worship of the Queen of Heaven and possibly other goddesses does not mean that women were the 'primary' worshippers of female deities.[524] Instead, while all household members likely worshipped such beings, women should be seen as facilitators or enablers of that worship which thus contributes to their status and identity. In this way bread and beer have agency in the construction of social identities.

The Queen of Heaven was a goddess who likely had attributes of Ištar in east Semitic cultures and the west Semitic Astarte, both of whom had associations with war.[525] Astarte was depicted with swords and shields, described as mighty in a chariot and held the epithet 'Lady of Combat', while Ištar was known as 'the Lady of the Battle and of the Fight'.[526] While the depiction of this goddess worship in Jeremiah is likely polemical and thus perhaps a caricature, Jer 44:17-18 suggests that offering beer and bread to the Queen of Heaven was thought by the women to prevent war and famine:

> Instead, we will do everything that we have vowed, make offerings to the Queen of Heaven and pour out libations to her, just as we and our ancestors, our kings and our officials, used to do in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. We used to have plenty of food, and prospered, and saw no misfortune. But from the time we stopped making offerings to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out libations to her, we have lacked everything and have perished by the sword and by famine. (Jer 44:17-18)

[524] Saul Olyan, 'What Do We Really Know about Women's Rites in the Israelite Family Context?', *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religion* 10 (2010), 58. See my previous comment on this issue in n.???
[525] Ackerman, '"And the Women Knead Dough"', 22.
[526] Ackerman, '"And the Women Knead Dough"', 23-5.

The statement that war and famine had affected the women's communities since they stopped making offerings to the Queen of Heaven demonstrates the agency that both the women, and the bread and beer, had by their ability to instigate change. One of the reasons beer was perceived to have such social impact may have been due to its psychoactive properties which allowed consumers to enter into an altered state of consciousness associated with the divine sphere. While such consumption was less likely to have occurred during regular daily consumption, larger quantities may have been consumed on Shabbat, and certainly at larger meals celebrating life cycle events or harvest feasts.[527] The physical sensations of being relaxed and cheerful that alcohol induces may well have contributed to the continuation of such ritual practices involving the shared consumption of beer that were thought to contribute to the continued well-being and security of the household and wider community.[528]

As beer brewing was associated with female deities in ancient southwest Asia, such as Sumerian Ninkasi discussed above, it may even have been thought that goddesses caused the transformation of cooked grains into alcoholic beer. The 'magical' beer jar lids and the bubbling of fermenting liquid likely added to beer's supernaturally infused quality. Seeing and hearing a liquid appearing to boil without the use of a heat source and witnessing the solid grain husks appearing to move of their own accord within the jar likely added further divine mystery to the beverage which effected a change in physiological sensations and perception. If sexual activity was also more likely to occur after beer consumption then further connotations between fertility, beer, and goddesses may also have been present. Drunkenness caused by beer consumption was likely a primary way of communicating with, and therefore worshipping, deities, and as such beer was likely perceived as vital to the positive socio-ritual relationships between humans and the divine. In this way beer was a prime social agent in establishing relationships between household members and deities, making it socially valuable and desirable.

The use of beer as a sacrificial item to both gods and goddesses in ancient Israel and Judah dovetails with the idea offered by Jonathan Z. Smith that

[527] Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 209-239; Meyers, 'Feast Days and Food Ways', 230-235.
[528] Meyer & Quenzer, *Psychopharmacology*, 224.

sacrifice is an elaboration on domestication, discussed in detail in the previous chapter.[529] Grains that have been cultivated and domesticated over time, but then also processed into other products such as flour and beer, are sacrificed precisely because of the value they were held to have in the household or wider social network. Beer is a domestic product, it has a vibrant role in the household forging social relations between humans and deities through its psychoactive qualities. As a basic foodstuff along with bread, beer-sacrifice likely constituted a major part of sacrificial offerings, as opposed to meat, as suggested by McClymond.[530] Such sacrifices to deities aim at securing future blessings for successful harvests and the divine transformation of grains into alcoholic liquid. Such a perspective on sacrifice and its role in the cultures of ancient Israel and Judah should be viewed in contrast with the traditional focus on text-centric constructions of sacrifice, which also primarily has attended to meat sacrifice.

Because of the androcentric focus in and on biblical texts, goddess worship has commonly been perceived as deviant by biblical scholars, likely due to the pejorative presentation it is given in Jeremiah. However, it is likely that such practices were relatively widespread; not only does Jer 44:17 state that making drink offerings to the goddess was practised in urban centres across Judah, but it also comments that kings, officials and those in Jerusalem worshipped the Queen of Heaven. The practice is presented as having gone back for generations by the expression ‘our fathers’ or ‘our ancestors’, which means males also were followers of this goddess. This demonstrates that goddess worship, and the use of beer to make offerings, was likely a common, widespread, normative part of the religious lives of the ancient Judahites and it is the scribe of Jeremiah here who is trying render this worship deviant due to his Yahweh-alone ideology.

Another of alcohol’s socio-ritual roles is its implementation in feeding the dead. There are some legal texts from Mesopotamia which require a woman to leave food offerings for dead ancestors which included water, hot broth, bread, beer,

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[529] Jonathan Z. Smith, ‘The Domestication of Sacrifice’ *in Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 151.
[530] Kathryn McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008), 87-9.

flour, wine, honey and occasionally the rib section of a sacrificed animal.[531] Food and drink was likely also used in the burial practices of the ancient Israelites and Judahites (Deut 26:14; Ps 16:4; Isa 65:3-5; Tob 4:17).[532] For the ordinary people of Israel and Judah who did not have access to wine, the supplies that they were required to provide for their deceased loved ones would have been everyday food such as bread and beer. This seems to have also been the case in Egyptian burials where not only do we find the bakery/brewery models as discussed above, but also jars that likely contained beer.[533] Beer was also drunk at Egyptian feasts including specifically at burials.[534]

The Babylonian *kispum* ritual was a monthly family meal, linked to the moon, in which food items such as meat and alcohol were consumed.[535] The deceased ancestors would also have shared in this and a mutual blessing would have occurred: 'the living were to bless the dead by invoking them and presenting them with food and drink, and the dead would bless the living with peace.'[536] The Ugaritic Funerary Text (*KTU* 1.161) seems to be a ritual text that would have been spoken aloud during some sort of royal funerary event. After instructing the audience to descend to the underworld to the 'heroes' of old, Lines 27 to 30 of 'The liturgy (book) of the nocturnal sacrifices' read as follows:

> One and make an offering, two and make an offering,
> Three and make an offering, four and make an offering,
> Five and make an offering, six and make an offering,
> Seven and make an offering. Bring/Cast forth a bird.[537]

There are several interpretations for these lines, one is that it is a command to ritually descend to the underworld in mourning with offerings for the deceased.

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[531] Karen Rhea Nemet-Nejat, *Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Westport: Greenwood, 1998) 144.
[532] Brian Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 291.
[533] Leslie A. Warden, *Pottery and Economy in Old Kingdom Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 97.
[534] Geller, 'Bread and Beer in Fourth-Millennium Egypt', 263.
[535] Karel Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria & Israel: Continuity & Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 50-52.
[536] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia,* 65.
[537] Theodore J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 7- 9.

Another is that these would be seven sacrifices for a seven day feast.[538] Van der Toorn also sees this text as reflecting the thought of the ancients in Syria that the dead needed food offerings.[539] The actions detailed in these texts were carried out for two reasons; first, they provided dead relatives with 'essential services such as libations and offerings (the motive being devotion and/or placation) and, secondly, to secure favours or blessings for the present life.'[540] A similar idea is also found in the Babylonian text *The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty* (c. 1810–1750 BCE): 'Come (O dead ancestor), eat this, drink this, (and) bless Ammiṣaduqa, the son of Ammiditana, the king of Babylon.'[541] The dead are invoked to come and eat and drink the offerings that are being given by the living in return for beneficent action. In a Middle Babylonian text (c. 1595 –1155 BCE) a daily funerary meal was offered to deceased ancestors consisting of fine flour and water, called a *kispu ginû*.[542] In the grave remains of many burial sites certain objects repeatedly turn up such as bowls, plates, ladles, food storage jars, jugs, cooking pots and faunal remains.[543] There are several possible explanations for the presence of these items. One is that these were items left with the recently deceased in order to provide them with food and the necessary implements to eat in the afterlife, whatever that was. A second explanation may be that living relatives, upon depositing the body, held a ritualised feast and left the vessel and other utensils behind.

In the light of this cultural milieu, it appears that offerings of alcohol and food were made to deceased ancestors in return for future blessings of fertility for the living household network. These offerings were likely not only 'consumed' by the dead, but also by the living either in daily meals or larger feasts. Some biblical texts indicate such practices were normative in ancient Israel and Judah. Deut 26:14 states 'I have not eaten of it [the sacred portion of the tithe] while in mourning; I have not removed any of it while I was unclean; and I have

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[538] Lewis, *Cults of the Dead* 31, 44-5, 70, 96.
[539] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia,* 163.
[540] Lewis, *Cults of the Dead,* 31.
[541] Jacob J. Finkelstein, 'The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, 20 (1996), 95-118.
[542] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia,* 49.
[543] Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 72-82, 103-8.

not offered any of it to the dead.' This command is the only one which relates to offering food to the dead and it is not an absolute rule outlawing all offerings to the dead. Instead it only specifies that the tithed food should not be offered to the dead; not that it is forbidden to make offerings to the dead in general. Lewis notes 'one cannot rule out the possibility that this prohibition referred to offerings made periodically as a part of a continuing death cult as well as those offerings presented after the initial interment.'[544] Thus, while the law does not allow the tithed food to be offered to the dead, other food may have been offered to the dead both immediately after death and regularly afterwards. Van der Toorn specifically sees sacrifice to the dead here as an Israelite practice that Deuteronomy rallies against.[545] Brian Schmidt, who holds a minority view and has denied that there was a 'cult of the dead' in the sense that the dead had agency in the lives of the living, still recognises the fact that the dead were fed with food and drink as a component in the regular mortuary rites for their commemoration.[546] The feeding of the dead (which implies passivity), however, opposes my conception in which the dead are perceived to share in household meals and thus are socially active.

Saul Olyan sees mourning rites, such as the offering of food and drink, as acts of identification with the dead which establishes a new relationship between the deceased and the mourner in which the dead enact 'beneficent intervention' in return for the offerings:[547]

> …mourning is a context for the accomplishment of socially significant 'work' (e.g. negotiating changed statuses), it is unlikely that identification is motivated simply by pity, as a number of scholars seem to suggest; rather, it is more probable that it has concrete social consequences. Though we cannot be sure, it is possible that the symbolic link established by the mourner's

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[544] Lewis, *Cults of the Dead,* 103.

[545] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia,* 209.

[546] Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead,* 10, 275. See Lewis' discussion on this in 'How Far Can Texts Take Us? Evaluating Textual Sources for Reconstructing Ancient Israelite Beliefs about the Dead' in Barry Gittlen ed. *Sacred Time Sacred Place: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 190-4.

[547] Saul Olyan, *Biblical Mourning: Ritual and Social Dimension*s (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 45, 60.

> honouring of the dead through acts of identification is intended to establish a new, mutually beneficial relationship between the mourner and the dead. In this newly configured association, the mourner invokes the name of the dead and brings him food offerings…[548]

Thus even the use of food and alcohol in rituals specifically aimed at the deceased are social. Such consumption has a socially transformative effect in that the dead are re-socialised in a way that is meaningful for the living.

Alcohol consumption was likely implemented socially in mortuary ritual because it was a potent device for the transformation and creation of memory: 'the separation of the deceased from the world of the living involved erasing memory of them as a social player, thereby creating space for the renegotiation of social relationships between the living'.[549] The enhanced sensations experienced as a result of alcohol consumption may well have helped establish group memories which reaffirmed community cohesion in the wake of the death of a group member.[550] Drinking large quantities of alcohol can also result in such drastic alterations in perception and emotions that it may have been utilised to temporarily cope with emotional pain caused by the loss of a loved one.[551]

Beer, along with food, was thus entangled within the social household network and was a key actant in the construction and maintenance of social relationships and identities. This entanglement drew together not only the living participants of household life (the humans and animals), but also the dead and male and female deities. Without the staple foodstuffs of the agro-pastoral household, of which beer was one, important social negotiations and constructions would have been impossible, especially in the event of family

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[548] Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*, 60.
[549] Collard, 'Drinking with the Dead', 30; See also Yannis Hamilakis, 'Eating the Dead: Mortuary Feasting and the Politics of Memory in the Aegean Bronze Age Societies' in Keith Branigan ed. *Cemetery and Society in the Aegean Bronze age* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 117.
[550] Louise Steel, 'Creation and Expression of Identity in Cyprus at the End of the Late Bronze Age' in C. Gallou, M. Georgiadis and G. M. Muskett eds. *Dioskouroi, Studies Presented to W.G. Cavanagh and C.B. Mee on the Anniversary of Their 30-year joint contribution to Aegean Archaeology* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2008),156.
[551] Collard, 'Drinking with the Dead', 30.

crises such as deaths. Having discussed the most common alcoholic beverage, I shall now explore the more costly source of alcohol that, while less accessible to most of the population, was highly valued and thus utilised by the elites of Israel and Judah.

3.5 Viticulture in ancient Israel and Judah

Viticulture, the practice of growing vines and processing grapes into wine, was well-developed in Iron Age Israel and Judah. Nevertheless, a successful batch of wine required precise knowledge and skill, the process being lengthy, costly, and full of potential risks. Fortunately, we have much more archaeological material culture pertaining to wine production in ancient Israel and Judah compared to beer, and a wealth of references to wine and vine-growing in Hebrew Bible texts. Given that such texts were likely not written by the people who actually tended vineyards and made wine, they should be read cautiously, with an eye to their poetic, symbolic, and ideological motives.

The first step in building a vineyard is acquiring land on which to start cultivation. This could be inherited, purchased, or possibly rented from a land owner. Although no direct conclusions can be drawn from a modern ethnographic example, it is worth noting that to purchase an empty vineyard or orchard for Jebaliyah Bedouin in southern Sinai costs the equivalent resources which would allow an average family to subsist for five months.[552] This serves to demonstrate that land purchase was costly, regardless of the specific amount in monetary terms, and thus was likely not possible for ordinary agro-pastoral Israelites and Judahites who implemented a survival subsistence strategy. It is more likely that most vineyard tenders inherited their plots. The inscriptions found on the Samaria ostraca appear to be accounts of orders of wine and oil from vineyards to the capital city of Samaria in Israel and have been dated to the first half of the 8th century BCE.[553] On some ostraca, such as ostraca one, there are three examples of a personal name of a vineyard owner and his

[552] Avi Perevolotsky, 'Orchard Agriculture in the High Mountain Region of Southern Sinai', *Human Ecology* 9 (1981), 341.
[553] Ivan T. Kaufman, 'The Samaria Ostraca: An Early Witness to Hebrew Writing' *The Biblical Archaeologist* 45 (1982), 232-3.

patronym. Carey Ellen Walsh suggests that this demonstrates the patrilineal descent of 'land and lineage' that were passed on from one generation to the next via the patriarchal line.[554]

There is no direct evidence to suggest that women owned vineyards despite two allusions to this in the biblical texts (which thus should not be taken literally). Song 1:6 states: 'My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept!' The vineyard is a metaphor for the female speaker's sexuality, rather than an actual vineyard.[555] The Woman of Strength in Proverbs 31 is said to buy land and plant a vineyard in it (v.16). But the Woman of Strength is not to be taken as a historical basis for the majority of women; rather she is an ideal to be interpreted allegorically. Consequently this text probably indicates that it would have been uncommon for a woman to own a vineyard.[556] It is precisely because of the unlikelihood that a woman would own a vineyard that makes these literary features in the poems of Song of Songs and Proverbs work effectively. Because a woman would never have 'kept' a vineyard it is clear that this usage is euphemistic, rather than a literal statement. Similarly, the Woman of Strength poem begins with the rhetorical question 'who can find?' (v.10) because the woman being described is a rarity,[557] if not completely unrealistic.

The Woman of Strength is portrayed as very wealthy and high status: her family wears dyed red-purple clothes (dyeing cloth this colour was costly due to the use of costly marine snails);[558] she has 'exotic' food from far away[559] and servant-girls at her disposal;[560] she is able to give to the poor, and is wealthy enough to buy land. While Christine Yoder gives examples of royal women from the Persian period who acquired land, the acquisition was either through dowry or bequest and therefore is not the same as buying land outright as conveyed in

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[554] Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine,* 65.
[555] Cheryl J. Exum, *Song of Songs: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 105-6.
[556] Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 10 - 31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 908-12.
[557] Christine Roy Yoder, 'The Woman of Substance: A Socioeconomic Reading of Proverbs 31:10-31', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123 (2003), 432.
[558] Yoder, 'The Woman of Substance' 442.
[559] Yoder, 'The Woman of Substance' 440.
[560] Yoder, 'The Woman of Substance' 443.

Prov 31:16.[561] In fact, the Hebrew term in Proverbs is not the usual verb 'buy,' שׁבר, but instead is the verb 'take,' לחק, suggesting instead that the land may be something she 'takes' in receipt from her husband or father.

Additionally, Yoder uses royal women from Persian cities such as Persepolis, Nippur, Susa and also Elephantine as historical examples to support the claim that the Woman of Strength historically reflected ancient Israelite or Judahite women.[562] There is no evidence, however, to show that non-royal women bought or owned vineyards in Israel and Judah. Despite this, ordinary women from families wealthy enough to own vineyards probably did help during the harvest periods as an extra pair of hands, as long as they did not have child rearing responsibilities or other household-based activities such as bread making or weaving to attend to.[563]

If the plot of land was on a hill or mountain slope it would have required terracing in order to create flat levels for vines to grow and to prevent soil erosion and water runoff. Vines seem to prefer growing on hills as the incline means sunlight reaches the full length of the vine and cold air – which can cause frost – can easily move down to the valley allowing warmer air to insulate the vines.[564] Terraces also allow rainfall to spread out over the level surface to be used by the plant growing there instead of running down to the bottom of the hill, but this required they be built with layers of rocks at their foundation to prevent them from becoming water logged which would have been detrimental to tree growth.[565] As terracing required artificially building these levels over exposed bedrock, or if possible, pre-existing soil deposits, the transportation of large quantities of soil, either from a nearby area or further away, would have required a large amount of physical labour.[566] In addition, stones would have

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[561] Yoder, 'The Woman of Substance', 444.
[562] Yoder, 'The Woman of Substance', 444.
[563] The Jebaliyah Bedouin whose main produce is grapes and other fruit have a similar system: 'the orchard requires supervision and care throughout the year… the males are responsible for cultivating the orchard, but are supported by female labor in the summer.' From Perevolotsky, 'Orchard Agriculture', 343.
[564] Jeff Cox, *From Vines to Wines* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 35-6.
[565] Shimon Gibson, 'Agricultural Terraces and Settlement Expansion in the Highlands of Early Iron Age Palestine: Is There a Correlation Between the Two?' in A. Mazar, ed. *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 2001), 115.
[566] Gibson 'Agricultural Terraces', 114.

been required to build terrace walls to support the soil of the terraces, as well as to provide drainage in the soil. These stones could have come from local fields but also from quarries or dilapidated structures.[567] The transportation of such stones again would have demanded a large investment in energy, either through hired labour or diverting energy from other agricultural and pastoral activities. For the Jebaliyah Bedouins, the cost of construction in the mid-1980s amounted to the equivalent of five to ten months subsistence for one family.[568]

Once the land was prepared the vines could be planted. Vine cuttings or shoots were planted, rather than sowing seeds which took longer to grow and produced fruit of poor quality.[569] Each vine requires a certain amount of space to prevent competition for water, sunlight and nutrients from the soil. To ensure each vine has enough space they needed to be planted certain distances apart and have certain depths of soil so that the roots could spread out properly. These measurements change depending on the type of vine and geographical location so each Iron Age vintner would have had this specific knowledge for his crop.[570] The vines then could have been trained on stakes or poles; this trellising can be seen in Egyptian tomb paintings[571] and on the relief from Nineveh of King Ashurbanipal and his queen drinking underneath a canopy of vines that appear to be growing off of poles.[572] However, in the Lachish relief from Nineveh, the vines of Israel are growing along the ground rather than on any kind of support. This technique may have been used to promote earlier ripening due to the fruit being nearer to the warm ground, but it also put them at greater risk of pests such as mice.[573] Having said that, some biblical passages suggest that trellising might have been known to the biblical writers: Mic 4:4, 1 Kgs 4:25 and Zech 3:10 refer to ‘every man under his vine.’ If vines were not trellised then they likely would not grow above knee level and one would not be able to comfortably sit beneath their shade. Ideologically, this image is also one of safety and security in the land which allows those wealthy enough to relax in

[567] Gibson ‘Agricultural Terraces’, 115.
[568] Perevolotsky, ‘Orchard Agriculture’, 341.
[569] Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine,* 100-101, 105.
[570] Cox, *From Vines to Wines,* 39-40.
[571] James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 155, photo 451.
[572] Unwin, *Wine and the Vine,* 54, Fig. 12.
[573] Mikhal Dayagi-Mendels, *Drink and Be Merry: Wine and Beer in Ancient Times* (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 2000), 18-19.

the shade of their vineyards. This demonstrates the fact that owning a vineyard was the epitome of a wealthy, stable life, rather than an aspect of a survival subsistence strategy which most Judahites and Israelites lived by.

As the plant grows it is necessary for the vintner to prune the branches of the vine back in order to encourage fruit growth and reduce wood or leaf growth. Knowing how to best prune a vine requires 'extensive knowledge' of how pruning affects certain vines in certain conditions and therefore requires 'considerable skill' from any labourer involved in this activity.[574] Both over-pruning and under-pruning can have drastic consequences on grape production, not just in the same year but for subsequent harvests as well.[575] In the Gezer calendar, line six reads: 'his two months of pruning', however, confirming in which two months this important activity occurred has been a matter of debate.[576] Regardless of exactly when the pruning was carried out, this inscription shows that it was an important task for an owner of a vineyard which required a significant amount of time.

Vines, as all plants, require water in order to survive and grow. In a tomb painting from the Fifth-Dynasty (c. 2400-2300 BCE) tomb of Ptahhotep in Saqqara, Egypt a depiction of a grapevine on a crossbar supported by two poles also shows a worker watering the ground of the vines from a jar.[577] It seems that irrigation was not the primary method of watering vines until the Eighteenth Dynasty (1550-1292 BCE) and only then for elite vineyards such as those in temples or palace gardens.[578] However, overwatering vines can actually result in a lower quality of wine because putting the plant under water stress can encourage fruit to ripen.[579] As there was (and is) a lack of permanent rivers and streams in Israel/Palestine, irrigation was not an option for most

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[574] Ronald S. Jackson, *Wine Science: Principles and Application* 4th Ed. (London: Academic Press, 2014), 158.
[575] Jackson, *Wine Science,* 150; Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine* 119-20.
[576] See discussion in Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine,* 37-8; Jan A. Wagenaar, *Origin and Transformation of the Ancient Israelite Festival Calendar* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 17-20.
[577] Norman de Garis Davies, *The Mastaba of Ptahhetep and Akhethtep at Saqqareh*, Part 2 (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1913), Pl. XXI.
[578] Thomas G. H. James, 'The Earliest History of Wine and its Importance in Ancient Israel' in Patrick E. McGovern, Stuart J. Fleming and Solomon H. Katz eds. *The Origins and Ancient History of Wine*, 3rd Ed. (Philadelphia: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 2000), 205.
[579] Jancis Robinson, *The Oxford Companion to Wine*, 4th Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 378.

Israelite and Judahite vintners. Instead rainfall was relied upon which may have, on the one hand, led to the risk of drought and a failed crop in some years, but on the other hand, the water stress likely led to a higher quality of wine in years with sufficient rainfall.

The grape harvest would likely have taken place around August to September when the grapes turned from green to dark red signalling the arrival of sweet fruit rather than sour berries.[580] Whereas today modern vintners tend to use a piece of equipment, known as a hydrometer - which tests the sugar percentage in grapes - to decide when to start harvesting, Israelite and Judahite vintners would have had to go by their senses alone: taste, smell, touch and appearance. [581] This detection therefore would have required much skill and knowledge passed on from one generation to the next; harvesting too early could make the wine bitter, too late and the crop may start to fall from the vines and rot. In order to harvest the grapes (and for pruning also), clusters would have been cut from the vines with a metal implement. This may have been something similar to the pruning knives (מזמרות) mentioned in Isa 18:5 which describes the tending of vines before the harvesting of the grapes.[582] Though no implements have been found in the Iron Age archaeological record, possible examples of these knives have been found from later periods such as one from Bethsaida in a Hellenistic context.[583]

Baskets were likely used to collect grapes during the harvest, as evidenced by a painting from the Tomb of Paheri at El Kab, Egypt.[584] Baskets are mentioned in biblical texts as vessels for fruit (e.g.; Deut 26:2, Jer 24:2 and Amos 8: 1-2). While grape baskets have not been found in archaeological excavations, being made from straw or other biodegradable material, it is likely that these were the main vessels used in the harvests based on the comparative iconographic evidence and their relatively low cost to make.

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[580] Wagenaar, *Origin and Transformation of the Ancient Israelite Festival Calendar*,*18;* Unwin, *Wine and the Vine*, 29.
[581] Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine,* 170-1.
[582] Translations are mine unless otherwise stated.
[583] Dayagi-Mendels, *Drink and Be Merry,* 21-2.
[584] Curtis, *Ancient Food Technology*, 150. Other Egyptian tombs also depict baskets for collecting grapes. See Hugh Johnson, *Vintage: The Story of Wine* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 31; William J. Darby, Paul Ghalioungui and Louis Grivetti, *Food: The Gift of Osiris* Vol. 2 (London: London Academic Press, 1977), 558, fig. 14, 15.

After collection, the grapes would then have been transported, possibly on the back of a working animal, for treading in a wine press. In the Iron Age, wine presses were often cut directly into rock, such as the one found at Gibeon and dated to the eighth and seventh centuries BCE.[585] Shallow basins were large enough to allow two people to tread the grapes. The juice would flow into a plastered cellar for the initial fermentation. An earlier installation excavated at Tel Michal – likely constructed in the 10th Century BCE – is not rock cut but instead consists of two vats dug into the ground that are lined with bricks and plaster.[586] The two rectangular vats are connected via a channel to two circular receiving vats, which have a depression at their bottom to allow sediment to collect there, making it easier to clean and keeping some sediment out of the finished liquid. This complex at Tel Michal also has a central basin, which may have been used as a place to pile the stacks of grapes before treading so that the juice oozing from under the weight of the stack was not wasted and could be drained into the vats.[587] In order to release the juice from the grapes the fruit would have been trodden by foot. This method prevents the grape skins from bruising and secreting a bitter fluid, which could ruin the wine.[588] This treading would usually have been carried out near the vineyard as fermentation could occur within a few hours of the grapes being picked. Because of this, it is possible that in archaeological sites where vats have been found, the associated vineyard would have been not too far away (indeed, only a few from the Iron Age have been found near domestic buildings).[589]

In Egyptian tomb art treaders are shown holding onto either a cross bar or ropes hanging from a cross bar above their heads in order to prevent themselves from falling.[590] These artworks might explain the presence of holes

[585] James B. Pritchard, *Winery, Defenses, and Surroundings at Gibeon* (Philadelphia: The University Museum, 1964), 1-27.
[586] Ze'ev Herzog, 'A Complex of Iron Age Winepresses (Strata XIV-XIII)' in Ze'ev Herzog, George Rapp Jr. and Ora Negbi, eds. *Excavations at Tel Michal, Israel* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 75.
[587] Ze'ev Herzog, 'A Complex of Iron Age Winepresses', 73.
[588] Curtis, *Ancient Food Technology*, 151.
[589] Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 44.
[590] Curtis, *Ancient Food Technology*, 151 and see the depiction on 152 from the 18th Dynasty Tomb of Nakht at Thebes.

suitable for holding the ends of poles found in the rock around vats.[591] Despite having something to hold on to, it seems that treading was a particularly tiring activity, especially in the hot summer sun. One description of this process from a Byzantine document (compiled in the 10th Century CE from earlier texts), the *Geoponika*, illustrates how strenuous this activity may have been in Israel and Judah. It reads: 'The men that press must get into the press having scrupulously cleaned their feet, and none of them must eat or drink while in the press, nor must they climb in and out frequently…the men that tread must also be fully clad and have their girdles on, on account of the violent sweating.'[592] That treading grapes caused violent sweating suggests that it was vigorous and strenuous work and it appears frequent rests were not permitted.

As the grapes are treaded the natural yeasts living on the grape skins mix with the sugars of the grape juice which allows for the last major stage of wine production, fermentation. It was the treading process which began to turn the grape juice into an alcoholic beverage; during this first stage of fermentation the grape juice would have bubbled and foamed in the press as carbon dioxide was rapidly produced by the yeast.[593] Within six to twelve hours fermentation would have reached its peak, then a lower rate of fermentation could continue either in the wine vat or in jars as long as carbon dioxide released from the fermentation process was able to escape.[594] While fermentation could continue for two to five days, it was likely evident to the ancient vintner that the juice had turned to wine within the first hours of treading due to the vigorous bubbling.

Walsh states that 'while the grape harvest had its risks and uncertainties, once the vintner got the grapes to press, fermentation was a hardy and therefore dependable process.'[595] Such a case was likely to some extent, because the yeast was already present on the skin of the grapes and could easily start reacting with the sugar present in the juice. It must be remembered, however, that the ancient vintner did not know what was really happening on a chemical

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[591] Gösta W. Ahlström, 'Wine Presses and Cup-Marks of the Jenin-Megiddo Survey,' *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (1978), 30-34.
[592] Quoted in Marcus Louis Rautman, *Daily Life in the Byzantine Empire* (London: Greenwood Press, 2006), 181.
[593] Cox, *From Vines to Wines*, 129.
[594] Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine,* 187.
[595] Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine,* 188.

level, as he had no 'scientific' knowledge of yeasts, oxygen, carbon dioxide, nitrogen or any other chemical involved in this reaction that produces ethanol. The vintner did, however, need to know when to put the wine in jars after the first stage of fermentation which uses oxygen, i.e. aerobic fermentation, in order that fermentation without oxygen, i.e. anaerobic fermentation, could occur.[596] If wine is left open to oxygen in the air for too long an acid bacteria called *acetobacter* would turn it to vinegar. [597] Fermentation was inherently precarious because there was no way to control the chemical process; in modern wine making vintners can test the wine and add sugars or acids and control the temperature to increase or decrease the speed of fermentation, all of which affects the final product. But the ancient vintner knew when to stop only through trial and error or inherited wisdom rather than by understanding the chemical process.

Such a labour intensive and valuable process also likely carried socio-religious connotations, some of which can be gleaned from ancient texts. Beginning with the 'Song of the Vineyard' from Isa 5:1-2, the whole process of building a vineyard with all the necessary structures and conditions required to produce viable grapes is presented as an activity undertaken by Yahweh:

> My beloved had a vineyard
> on a very fertile hill.
> He dug it and cleared it of stones,
> and planted it with choice vines;
> he built a watchtower in the midst of it,
> and hewed out a wine vat in it;
> he expected it to yield grapes,
> but it yielded wild grapes. (Isa 5:1-2)

In this poem, Yahweh is depicted as an expert vintner, carrying out everything necessary to grow grapes successfully. The care required for each task is demonstrated: the vintner would need to pick a fertile area to clear of stones,

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[596] Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine,* 188-9; Jeff Cox, *From Vines to Wines,* 121-122.
[597] Patrick E. McGovern, *Ancient Wine: The Search for the Origins of Viticulture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 55; Cox, *From Vines to Wines,* 121.

and build a watchtower to enable constant surveillance in order to prevent the valuable plants from being damaged. Here, the wine vat is hewed out of the rock in preparation for the treading of good grapes. The vine, however, does not bear good fruit; instead, wild or bitter grapes, apparently unsuitable for wine, are produced, thus encapsulating Yahweh's disappointment with Israel. The portrayal of Yahweh as wine-maker, and all the careful labour it demands, suggests the cultivation of vineyards required divine wisdom. I shall return to this idea below.

Unlike beer, wine could be transported and traded as it did not turn sour quickly. One of the most significant pieces of archaeological evidence for the transportation of wine in Israel is the aforementioned Samaria ostraca, which attest that wine and olive oil were sent to the capital of Israel from surrounding sites of production. These inscriptions are thought by Yigael Yadin to be the records of court officials who kept track of the incoming orders of wine and olive oil to the king.[598] At excavations in el-Jib, thought to be biblical Gibeon, a winery was found containing numerous wine jars with inscriptions chiselled onto them dating from around 700 BCE.[599] These inscriptions appear to state the place of origin of the wine, a vineyard in Gibeon, and proprietors of the winery. Rainey argues that the *lmelek* ('for/belonging to the king') stamps found on jar handles across Israel/Palestine all originated from royal vineyards in the Judean hill country and suggests that they may reflect 'logistical preparations by Hezekiah to meet an Assyrian threat from the north and northwest.'[600] While this theory is based predominantly on biblical evidence and therefore must be taken cautiously, it does seem that wine might have functioned as a ration for military forces in Israel and surrounding cultures. In the annals of Sargon an official writes to the king to say that per the king's command he has set aside 200 homers of wine for the military guard.[601]

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[598] Yigael Yadin, 'Recipients or Owners: A Note on the Samaria Ostraca', *Israel Exploration Journal* 9 (1959), 186.
[599] Nahman Avigad, 'Some Notes on the Hebrew Inscriptions from Gibeon (Review-article)', *Israel Exploration Journal* 9 (1959), 132.
[600] Anson F. Rainey, 'Wine from the Royal Vineyards', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 245 (1982), 61.
[601] Marvin A. Powell, 'Wine and the Vine in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Cuneiform Evidence' in Patrick E. McGovern, Stuart J. Fleming and Solomon H. Katz eds. *The Origins and Ancient History of Wine*, 3rd Ed. (Philadelphia: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 2000), 120.

That the monarch appears to have had control over the distribution of wine across Judah and/or Israel demonstrates that access to wine was limited, or else it would not have needed to be controlled by the elites. It also suggests that this economic control was only possible in part due to the high symbolic status that wine held within society, as Tim Unwin notes: 'Once wine enters the ritual symbolism of societies, those who controlled its production were also able to maintain an element of economic control over the rest of the population.'[602] In other words, the cost of wine may have been driven up by its role in elite ritual and consumption, even in a military context, which would have made it even more inaccessible to ordinary, pastoral Israelites and Judahites who did not participate in higher socio-economic segments of society.

In order to trade vintage wines greater capital investments would have been necessary as costly storage space would have been required during the fermentation and aging process. There was also therefore a delay in the return on investment as the jars of aging wine would have needed at least a year to mature before being sold. Unwin states: 'Vintage wines can only therefore be produced by those who have sufficient capital reserves and who have little need of immediate access to money.'[603] Involvement in this kind of wine production was not possible for most ordinary agricultural Israelites or Judahites who lived hand to mouth by a survival subsistence strategy in which risks had to be avoided and stability was the desired state at all times. For these agriculturalists and pastoralists, trade would not have been actively pursued, any surplus products that came from animal husbandry or agriculture to supply the needs of the domestic unit would only have been used to further secure the stability of the current household rather than for gaining profit.[604] It is therefore unlikely that wine would have been produced and traded by the majority of rural Israelites and Judahites.

It is typical to find scholarly statements suggesting that ancient Israel and Judah's basic diet reflected what is known as 'the Mediterranean triad of grain,

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[602] Unwin, *Wine and the Vine*, 77.
[603] Unwin, *Wine and the Vine,* 12.
[604] Aharon Sasson. 'Reassessing The Bronze And Iron Age Economy: Sheep And Goat Husbandry In The Southern Levant As A Model Case Study' in A. Fantalkin and A. Yasur-Landau eds. *Bene Israel: Studies in the Archaeology of Israel and the Levant during the Bronze and Iron Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 114.

wine, and oil'.[605] As I have demonstrated, however, wine was likely not a core element of the diet of most Israelites and Judahites, being costly to produce and store, and ultimately controlled by the elites. Yannis Hamilakis has put forward a similar statement for olive oil, urging scholars not to submit 'to the popular myth of the great "Mediterranean Triad".'[606] The assumption of the reliability of this triad for Israel and Judah is, in part, due to a heavy reliance on biblical texts (notably Deut 7:13, 11:14; Hos 2:8), to inform foodways even though these texts reflect elite ideologies rather than historical realities. Other sources for the construction of grain, wine and oil as the 'building blocks' of Israelite and Judahite diet are the Arad Ostraca inscriptions, and the inclusion of these three foodstuffs as rations for Levites and other temple personnel in Chr 31:5 and Neh 13:12.[607] Inscriptions and temple locations attest to the elite nature of these sources and thus they should not be applied to the majority of ancient Israelites and Judahites. Surely the complexities of diet cannot be boiled down to three simple parts, none of which reflect the huge dependence on goats and sheep which, as discussed in the previous chapter, was widespread across ancient Israel and Judah and borne out in the archaeological remains.

While I wish to emphasise the more likely use of beer as a daily staple in ancient Israelite and Judahite households, wine may have been available at larger feasts and community gatherings of ordinary people. Households could have clumped resources together and traded them for wine in order that wine could be available at particularly special occasions. The reason why wine could not be traded for more regularly is because it would have jeopardised the security of the household; surplus stores of food would have been more likely to be used as a buffer for future food scarcity rather than traded for what would have been considered a luxury. The point being made is not that most people had absolutely no experience of tasting wine, rather, elites had more access to larger quantities of wine and this scenario should not be conflated with that of

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[605] For example, Pace, 'Feasting and Everyday Meals', 187-191; MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?'* 19; Dever, *The Lives of Ordinary People'*, 170; Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 47-8. Peter Altmann is closer to the mark in saying that a festive meal referred to in Deuteronomy would have included grain, wine, oil and meat. *Festive Meals in Ancient Israel: Deuteronomy's Identity Politics in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context* (Boston: de Gruyter, 2011), 211.

[606] Hamilakis, 'Food Technologies', 44.

[607] Pace, 'Feasting and Everyday Meals', 188-9; MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?'* 19; Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 47.

the majority of the population. Having considered the production and distribution of wine, its socio-ritual functions shall now be explored.

3.6 The Socio-Ritual Roles of Wine

In biblical constructions of temple ritual, wine dominates as the eminent liquid offering, often being paired with high status meat offerings (e.g. Exod 29:40; Num 15:5; 28:14), and administered by male temple elites. The texts present the purpose of these rituals as being the means by which the relationship between Israel and Yahweh is maintained.[608] More specifically, sacrifices removed the sin which was perceived to disrupt the relationship, or sociality, between Israel and Yahweh. For example, Num 15:22-26 lays out the necessary sacrificial requirements, which includes drink offerings, in order that the removal of unintentional, communal sin is effected. Yahweh's response, or receipt, of certain offerings is expressed by stating that it was a 'fragrant' offering for Yahweh: 'three-tenths of an ephah of choice flour, mixed with half a hin of oil, and you shall present as a drink offering half a hin of wine, as an offering by fire, a fragrant odour to Yahweh' (Num 15:9-10). Yahweh thus consumes his offerings, not by eating or drinking, but by inhaling the scent or smoke, and in this way both commensality and difference are established:

> It is true that a shared meal signals a basic form of unity, of coming together, but it is also true that the meal is a preeminent way of expressing hierarchical differences...Yahweh and his worshippers may consume the same substance, but they consume it in very different ways due to their basic ontological difference.[609]

Wine, like other elements of biblical sacrifice, had a vital role in the expression and inculcation of meaning, identity and status in these (textual) rituals. Its costly and high-status nature emphasised Yahweh's authoritative and glorified

[608] McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence*, 43.
[609] Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, '"If I were hungry, I would not tell you" (Ps 50, 12): Perspectives on the Care and Feeding of the Gods in the Hebrew Bible', *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 28 (2014), 177-8.

position at the top of the cultic hierarchy, while at the same time wine afforded the temple personnel who facilitated the offering as having an elite status of their own. The means by which Yahweh and humans consumed wine served to distinguish the profound difference in status and identity between the divine and earthly sphere. As a participant in the removal of sin, wine can also be seen as an agent which effects this ritual change.

Wine as a sacrificial offering again fits well with Jonathan Z. Smith's theory discussed above. Vines were cultivated and domesticated in a complex and developed system of viticulture. Wine production is again a manifestation of the domestication of plants, just as wheat and barley cultivation is. The resulting product is a liquid which had important socio-ritual functions in elite constructions of temple ritual and in elite social institutions (discussed below). Sacrificing wine then can also be seen as an elaboration on domestication. It is sacrificed in recognition of the social and ritual 'work' wine does in Israelite and Judahite elite culture, that is, it is sacrificed for the same reason it is cultivated. Wine's socio-ritual value and its agency in the construction of differentiated identities and statuses (see below) is what perpetuates its production and use and thus also its sacrifice. Sacrifice has a slightly transformed sense in the biblical construction in that wine is regarded as an agent which removes sin and thus maintains Israel's relationship with Yahweh, but the underlying logic is still sound.

If priestly scribes were aware that most of the population had little access to wine, then the emphasis on wine-usage in biblical rituals may have served to establish a radical difference in prestige and, perhaps, authenticity, between the rituals taking place in households and the idealised construction of ritual in their texts. Perhaps, as ideological texts, the use of large amounts of wine in temple sacrifices had a utopic edge. Such conspicuous consumption, whether by temple personnel or Yahweh, is in Michael Dietler's terms 'diacritical' in that it establishes and reifies hierarchical, unequal and exclusive social or political statuses.[610]

[610] Dietler, 'Theorizing the feast', 85.

Diacritical consumption often becomes emulated by those initially excluded and separated from the elite via their consumption of expensive or rare substances in distinguished settings.[611] Thus, aspirational groups may facilitate the spread of elite consumables through their own feasting and consumption events which results in a decrease in the diacritical significance of those substances; they no longer embody or symbolise the social significance they once had. Consequently, this consumption is quashed

> …only by the imposition of sumptuary laws that restrict consumption within clear social boundaries or by the use of exotic foods and consumption paraphernalia, access to which can be controlled through elevated expense or limited networks of acquisition.[612]

Such increased costs and inaccessibility may be exactly the situation that emerged concerning wine in Iron Age Israel and Judah, as also noted in regard to wine's wider context by Unwin (above).[613] As such, if wine was available on rare festal occasions to non-elite segments of the population it would likely have added heightened socio-ritual significance to the occasion. Emulation and imitation of the elite, the perceived 'prestige' implied in the ritual use of wine over beer, not to mention the increased alcohol content and its vivid red colour, would have charged such an event with elevated emotional and sensorial experiences aiding in the formation of social memory and cohesion.[614]

Wine appears to have been a key component in the elite ancient institution of the *marzēaḥ.* Textual references to the *marzēaḥ* originate from Ebla, Ugarit, Emar, Moab, Elephantine, Phoenicia, Nabatea, Palmyra, Rabbinic literature, and the Madeba map.[615] It is also referred to twice in Hebrew Bible texts suggesting it was a known phenomenon at the time these texts were composed or came into their final form (Amos 6:7; Jer 16:5). While not necessarily

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[611] Dietler, 'Theorizing the feast', 86.
[612] Dietler, 'Theorizing the feast', 86.
[613] Unwin, *Wine and the Vine,* 77.
[614] Meyers suggests similar ramifications induced by the experience of bloody sacrifices at feasts in 'The Function of Feasts', 156-8.
[615] All of these references are assessed in John L. McLaughlin, *The Marzēaḥ in the Prophetic Literature: References and Allusions in Light of the Extra-Biblical Evidence (*Leiden: Brill, 2001).

referring to the same practice, references to the *marzēaḥ* span a period from the second half of the third millennium BCE to the 6th century CE - a period of 3000 years.[616] The term at times referred to the group members of the institution, and at other times to the banquet itself.[617] The institution or association was an elite group who could own property, frequently including vineyards.[618] The 'upper-class membership' is discernible because of the documented wealth *marzēaḥ* associations had, the royal or temple locations of the discovered tablets referring to the *marzēaḥ*, and the noted inclusion of priests, temple personnel and members of the nobility in its ranks.[619] The description of the *marzēaḥ* in Amos 6:4-7 is consistent with this aspect, the participants drink wine, eat meat from costly animals and lounge about enjoying music.[620]

While no specific cultic rituals are discernible, a *marzēaḥ* appears to have usually been dedicated to divine patrons such as Ba'al, Anat, Ishtar, Shamash and others.[621] The most relevant text for this discussion is *CAT* 1.114, in which the head of the Ugaritic divine pantheon El hosts his own drinking feast:

> El sat, he assembled his drinking feast;
> El sat in his *marzēaḥ*.
> El drank wine to satiety,
> New wine to drunkenness.
> El went to his house,
> He stumbled to his court.
> Thukamuna and Shunama supported him.
> The "creeper" approached him,
> The one having two horns and a tail.
> He floundered in his (own) faeces and urine,
> El collapsed like the dead,
> El was like those who descend to the underworld.[622]

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[616] McLaughlin, *The Marzēaḥ*, 66.
[617] McLaughlin, *The Marzēaḥ*, 34-5, 64-5.
[618] Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 246; McLaughlin, *The Marzēaḥ*, 35.
[619] McLaughlin, *The Marzēaḥ*, 66-8.
[620] This text is discussed in detail in chapter 5.
[621] McLaughlin, *The Marzēaḥ*, 69.
[622] Translation from McLaughlin, *The Marzēaḥ,* 25-6.

El's excessive consumption of wine is the key focus of this text and the following lines detail the hangover cure sought by Athtart and Anat. Some scholars have interpreted the depiction of El drunk and dishevelled as an attempt to mock or debase the god.[623] This view has been rejected by Nicolas Wyatt, who states that scholars who

> …see this as evidence for a 'slighting of El' in a history of rivalry between his cult and that of Baal, and the comparable view of de Moor (1987: 134-35), who estimates that 'his shameful conduct is indicative of his impending downfall ... ' are in my view equally without foundation. This is not only to import an alien ethic (indeed an absurdly moralistic posturing) into the interpretation of ancient texts, but to misconstrue the symbolic parameters of this kind of mythology. El's behaviour, like that of Thor, Soma, Zeus and other gods with gargantuan appetites for liquor, is regarded as heroic.[624]

Indeed, reflections of the function such portrayals of drunkenness had should not impose modern preferences or biases on to ancient texts. Instead what must be considered is how such alcohol consumption would have been interpreted in its ancient context. Consequently, El's altered state of consciousness, specifically drunkenness, needs to be taken seriously as a physiological and psychological phenomenon with which the Ugaritic text's writers were familiar. El's drunken collapse is described as a state akin to that of the dead and as someone who descends to the underworld (which is also what he does when he hears of Baal's death, as discussed in chapter 6). The use of alcohol then, may well have been to induce a state of mind in which the consumer could ritually access the realm of the dead.[625] This has been observed by Wyatt also:

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[623] For example Altmann, *Festive Meals in Ancient Israel*, 173.
[624] Wyatt, *Religious texts from Ugarit*, 405, citing. J. C. De Moor, *An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit* (Leiden: Brill, 1987).
[625] Collard, 'Drinking with the Dead', 28-9.

> It sounds like a good description of too much alcohol! But it may give us some insight into the theological significance attributed to intoxication. It appears to have been interpreted as a mystical descent into the underworld, and the following ascent (on recovery) would perhaps be interpreted as a form of spiritual renewal. In the myth El himself establishes the paradigm.[626]

Alcohol consumed in large quantities leads to the loss of motor control, vomiting and unconsciousness.[627] While readers today may perceive these effects as undesirable and indices of lack of control and irresponsible drinking, they appear to be the desired outcome of El's imbibing: 'El's incontinence, in this case, may indicate a socially recognised level of intoxication consistent with achieving an ASC.'[628] In this way wine, being a more potent alcoholic beverage, may have been utilised in elite contexts as a ritual agent that could allow individuals to enter the realm of the dead and have some kind of social contact with the divine or venerated deceased. While the term *marzēaḥ* is not mentioned specifically in Isaiah 28, this text, which describe priests and prophets drinking wine (and beer) and vomiting everywhere (vv. 7-8), is thought to be an allusion to El's mythical *marzēaḥ.*[629] Thus, we can perhaps infer that such descents to the underworld, facilitated by alcohol-induced ASCs, were sought after by Jerusalem's elite also.

While the occurrence of a '*marzēaḥ* house' in Jer 16:5-7 precedes an instruction not to perform a range of mourning customs such as shaving, ritual cutting, burying the dead and offering comforting food and drink to mourners, the *marzēaḥ* is not inherently associated with funerary or mortuary rites.[630] We must however assume that a *marzēaḥ* could feature as a locus of mourning activities as well as other occasions. What is highly probable, regardless of the event, is that large quantities of alcohol were consumed including the elite substance that was wine.

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[626] Wyatt, *Religious texts from Ugarit,* 412, n.43.
[627] Meyer & Quenzer, *Psychopharmacology,* 224, 241.
[628] Collard, *Altered States of Consciousness*, 111.
[629] Baruch Halpern, '"The Excremental Vision": The Doomed Priests of Doom in Isaiah 28', *Hebrew Annual Review* (1986), 118; McLaughlin, *The Marzēaḥ*, 176-80.
[630] McLaughlin, *The Marzēaḥ*, 70-9.

Given the predominance of wine in elite ritual – that is temple sacrifice as constructed in biblical texts and the *marzēaḥ* - and the lack of detailed descriptions of beer production and consumption, it is necessary to discuss why biblical texts have such an unbalanced view and how this has impacted biblical scholarship.

3.7 How Wine Has Overshadowed Beer in Bible and Scholarship

Having discussed the production of both beer and wine in detail and addressed their roles as socio-ritual agents in different Israelite and Judahite segments of society, I shall now discuss the dominance of wine over beer in Hebrew Bible texts and biblical scholarship. Modern preferences, or cultural biases, which regard beer as 'less cultured' than wine appear to have skewed scholarship towards viewing beer drinkers as uncouth, which has led to a reluctance to allow for the possibility that Israelites and Judahites drank beer. Jack Sasson for example states that presenting beer to guests would have been 'uncivilised' compared to the wine Melchizedek offers Abraham.[631] Applying such a term as 'uncivilised' to beer reflects more of Sasson's assumptions and preferences about alcoholic beverages than any historical reality pertaining to the status of beer. He then, however, follows the remark with a perceptive clarification: 'I am not claiming that Israel went beer-less for much of its history; I am just suggesting that beer did not attract the literary mind as much as wine.'[632] Indeed, the biblical scribes probably viewed wine as more valuable, socially, ritually and economically, than beer and thus it is foregrounded in their writings: 'wine is associated with industry, trade, inheritance, ritual and status whilst beer is associated with the domestic sphere.'[633] It may even have been the ubiquitous and common nature of beer that meant it just did not seem valuable enough to write about, it did not represent anything special for the elite scribes. As beer was widely drunk by the rural Israelite and Judahite populations, scribal

[631] Jack M. Sasson, 'The Blood of Grapes: Viticulture and Intoxication in the Hebrew Bible' in Lucio Milano ed. *Drinking in Ancient Societies: History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near East* (Padua, Italy: Sargon, 1994), 402. See also Homan, 'Beer, Barley and שכר', 27 n.11 and the literature referred to there.
[632] Sasson, 'The Blood of Grapes,' 400.
[633] Ebeling and Homan, 'Baking and Brewing Beer in the Israelite Household', 46.

elites, while being in the minority as wine drinkers, have produced a distorted picture in which wine is portrayed as the primary drink of Israel and Judah. But such was not the case; rather, it was the elite status of wine and its perceived value socio-economically that meant it was an ideal substance on which to base literary compositions.

In what way did wine and wine production attract the 'literary minds' of the scribes who wrote about wine in their texts more than beer?[634] The cultivation of a vineyard - including building a wine vat - is described in the Song of the Vineyard in Isaiah 5 (discussed above), but we have no description of grain processing for beer or associated beer brewing equipment. Wine is more frequently a part of the sacrificial requirements in Leviticus and Numbers – whereas beer is mentioned only the once in Num 28:7 - and viticulture is pseudo-mythologised in its depiction as the first act of cultivation after the flood. Noah is set up as the legendary, ancestral progenitor of Israel and is cast as the pseudo-mythic 'inventor' of wine, discovering how to grow vines, make wine and was the first to experience its intoxicating effects (Gen 9:20-21).[635] This act of cultivation may have been viewed as a demonstration of ordering the natural world after the chaos of the flood. The production of wine in this text seems to symbolise the beginning of civilisation after the flood, possibly setting it apart from the 'sinful,' 'uncivilised,' people who lived on the earth in the mythic pre-flood era. Perhaps by casting wine as the first alcoholic substance in Israel's history the scribes were seeking to legitimate its use in their priestly sacrificial systems over beer. It is interesting that it is only Noah who is stated to cultivate vines; neither his wife nor any other female participates in this elite, male activity. For the scribes wine is, and always was, predominantly associated with the male sphere.

Within its high-status context, the vine was a particularly potent religio-mythic symbol because of its ability to vividly revive itself in the spring after appearing to wither and die in the winter. This renewal of fruitful fertility would have been representative of the whole agricultural cycle and complemented the common

[634] Sasson, 'The Blood of Grapes,' 402.
[635] This motif of legendary figures as originators of particular phenomenon in the Hebrew Bible is also found in the figure of Nimrod as the great hunter (Gen 10:8-9) and Aaron as the founder of the priesthood, for example.

mythologies of so-called 'dying and rising' gods such as Baal, a mythic function which may have applied also to Yahweh.[636] Its association with a cultivated, fertile potency might also index human fertility in the sense that wine's role as a social and sexual lubricant encouraged more intimate relationships by reducing social barriers. Indeed, several passages in Song of Songs use the vine and wine as images of erotic sexuality: 'O may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, and the scent of your breath like apples, and your kisses like the best wine flowing smoothly to lovers, gliding over my lips and teeth' (Song 7:8-9). Social boundaries are traversed with the help of wine in the story of Lot and his daughters in Genesis (the use of alcohol in sexual scenarios in the Hebrew Bible are discussed in Chapter 5).[637] Furthermore, the dark red colour of wine resembles blood, which in itself is a highly powerful agent associated with life and deities (for example, the 'blood of grapes' in Gen 49:11).[638]

As already discussed, wine was relatively costly to produce. Not only did it require land for vineyards at the expense of land for other food crops, but also grape harvests could easily fail due to drought, disease or destruction, meaning that much time and manual labour was required, not to mention space for storage which would not have been cheap.[639] Bearing in mind that a vintner had just one opportunity per year of producing wine - as vines only ripened once per annum - there were no second chances, which made the risk of a failed crop extremely high compared to the year round, low-risk production of beer from stored grains. The constant care and vigilance required of a vintner towards his vines is encapsulated by the elite male scribes in the poem the Song of the Vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-7) as discussed above. This poem describes the processes required to successfully nurture a vineyard, with Yahweh cast in the role of the vintner who brings Israel, referred to as 'rare vines,' from Egypt for planting. The poetic metaphor of Israel as a vine functions powerfully here because of the imagery of growth, death and renewed, high-status fertility with which the vine was associated.[640] In the poem the vine produces rotten fruit,

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[636] Unwin, *Wine and the Vine,* 49.
[637] Unwin, *Wine and the Vine*, 69-70.
[638] Unwin, *Wine and the Vine,* 66.
[639] Patrick E. McGovern, 'Wine's Prehistory', *Archaeology* 51 (1998), 32.
[640] Patricia A. Tull,' Persistent Vegetative States: Plants as People and People and Plants in Isaiah' in A Joseph Everson and Hyun Chun Paul Kim eds. *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 25-6.

which symbolises Israel's idolatry which then leads Yahweh to destroy the vineyard, an act that is symbolic of the destruction of Jerusalem.[641] Just as Yahweh might be imaged as a pastoral shepherd, caring for his flock of sacrificial sheep and goats (see Chapter Two), so too he is an agricultural vintner, producing the most important elite liquid in biblical sacrificial ritual. The vine motif was therefore employed in the scribal imagination in times of both flourishing and trauma.

The importance of wine in New Testament texts and later western Christianity which has dominated Hebrew Bible scholarship has also had an effect. Wine took on greater symbolic meanings with the development of the Eucharist and the miracle of Jesus turning water into wine. Tim Unwin, for example, states that one of the most important reasons why so much emphasis has been placed on wine over beer is because much of the symbolism used in the Hebrew Bible 'was then taken over and developed in Christianity, which in time became the dominant ideology of societies in which wine was to be the most important alcoholic beverage.'[642] It may be this focus on the Christological literary trope of wine that has obscured scholars' outlook on the role of alcohol in a broad sense, and the role of beer more specifically in ancient southwest Asia. Because of the importance of wine in Christianity and the social history of biblical scholarship, the biblical privileging of wine and the vine has had a causal effect on biblical scholars. The elite, high status, male rituals that are portrayed as Yahwistic and 'normative' in biblical texts, which overwhelmingly feature wine, have thus been the focus of scholarly attention.

Beer, on the other hand, has unfortunately been associated with the deviant 'other'. In the words of William Albright, it is the drink of 'loutish Philistines.'[643] Albright's remarks reflect the numerous examples of drinking vessels that have been found in so-called 'Philistine locations' that have been named 'Philistine beer jugs' despite the fact that they have turned up in excavations at sites across Israel Palestine.[644] It is not unreasonable to suggest that, given the socio-economic and class dynamics of academia in the West, some biblical

[641] Unwin, *Wine and the Vine,* 67-8.
[642] Unwin, *Wine and the Vine*, 70.
[643] William F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1949), 115.
[644] Hornsey, *Beer and Brewing,* 123.

scholars sought to distance the ‘upstanding’ Israelites and Judahites from any associations with such ‘uncivilised’ behaviour as certain remarks demonstrate:[645]

> Prominent among the artefacts that archaeologists have found in [the Philistines’] cities are beer jugs. Fierce fighters, hard drinkers. Our contemporary use of the term ‘Philistine’ to refer to the coarse and unsophisticated seems to be not far off the mark.[646]

This smacks of a Western supersessionist bias which prejudices cultures that are portrayed as ‘other’ in the biblical text, regardless of the fact that this biblical portrayal is ideological in nature. Similarly, William Dever in commenting on Lawrence Stager’s work on the ‘Philistine’ city Ashkelon remarks: ‘I like their [Stager’s] efforts to “gentrify” the Philistines from loutish beer-guzzlers to genteel sippers of white wine - no doubt, properly chilled and accompanied by just the right brie.’[647] Dever manages to both patronise Stager and simultaneously uphold the usual stereotype by proposing a new characterisation so extreme it cannot be taken seriously. Anything seen to be male, Yahwistic, elite and high-status has been taken as normative by both biblical scribes and biblical scholars, while anything female, Canaanite, Philistine, domestic, agricultural and economically sustainable has been either ignored or rendered deviant. I hope that future biblical scholarship is actively aware of these issues and that my scholarship will contribute to that awareness.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has reviewed and contextualised the methods of producing beer and wine using comparative material from ancient southwest Asian and Egyptian cultures in order to elucidate the historical reality of ancient Israelite

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645 See discussion in Francesca Stavrakopoulou ‘Religion at Home: The Materiality of Practice’ in S. Niditch ed. *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Ancient Israel* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2016), 346.

646 Eugene H. Peterson*, First and Second Samuel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 42.

647 William G. Dever, ‘Orienting the Study of Trade in Near Eastern Archaeology’ in Seymour Gitin ed. *Recent Excavations in Israel: A View to the West* (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1995), 116.

and Judahite alcohol production. Modern ethnographic evidence from communities who live in rural, agrarian pastoral economies has also been included to further explore the socio-ritual roles of beer. Beer was most probably consumed by large portions of ancient Israelite and Judahite society due to its cost-effectiveness, its nutritional qualities, and its psychoactive role in rituals. Being easily brewed in the home, beer was inextricably linked with the female sphere and had an important role in women's ritual experience, inculcating women's identities as facilitators of rituals involving beer and bread. Beer thus was a vital socio-ritual agent in the household, constructing social relationships amongst the entanglement of humans, animals and deities. Wine may have been available to a wider segment of society at large feasts, but being much costlier to produce, was likely the reserve of the elites and particularly influenced literary constructions of Yahwistic sacrifices performed by male priests. Wine was likely also drunk in the elite institution of the *marzēaḥ* where it would have functioned as a vibrant socio-ritual agent in many rituals, including those associated with funerary and mortuary cults. Overall this chapter has shown the importance, or even, centrality that alcohol had in the religious lives of all Judahites and Israelites regardless of their urban, rural, royal, domestic, priestly, female, male, Yahweh-alone, or polytheistic context. This vital role thus demonstrates why certain drinking practices were deemed to require regulation by certain segments of society. Now that the inherently socio-ritual nature of alcohol and food has been established, and their associated roles, it is possible to move on to address deviations from normative use of food and alcohol in order to elucidate the crime of the Rebellious Son. I shall begin with excessive consumption of food.

Chapter Four: Excessive Food Consumption in the Hebrew Bible

4.1 Overview

The Rebellious Son (Deut 21:18-21) has traditionally been understood to have been guilty of excessive consumption of food and alcohol. The previous chapters have investigated the socio-religious roles of food and alcohol in ancient Israel and Judah and thus provide a basis for exploring consumption activities that deviate from what was considered 'typical' consumption by biblical scribes. This chapter will therefore explore biblical representations of excessive food consumption in order to understand how this behaviour was regarded in ancient Israel and Judah, and whether the Rebellious Son's consumption was a deviation in terms of quantity and excess.

This chapter will make frequent use of two book-length ethnographic works that have focused on the role of food in traditional cultures, particularly in relation to the construction of memory and identity. The first, David Sutton's *Remembrance of Repasts*, is concerned with the foodways of the people on the Greek island of Kalymnos and pays particular attention to the use of food in social negotiations via acts of hospitality.[648] The second, Jon Holtzman's *Uncertain Tastes*, explores the way in which changes in the foodways of the Samburu of northern Kenya, as a result of colonisation, have impacted constructions of social hierarchy.[649] Needless to say, both contexts are far removed from Iron Age Israel and Judah and thus I am not seeking to use either the Samburu or the people of Kalymnos as analogous to the historical inhabitants of Israel and Judah. Instead, an approach will be used alike to that suggested by Johanna Stiebert:

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[648] David Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).
[649] Jon Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes: Memory, Ambivalence, and the Politics of Eating in Samburu, Northern Kenya* (London: University of California Press, 2009).

> …social-scientific perspectives can be illuminating but […] caution must be exercised in imposing modern models on to ancient texts, or in assuming that texts faithfully reflect social reality…When anthropological observations are used less ambitiously, however, as a fillip for reflection, or for deciding what a culture may deem 'thinkable' (Winkler; Stone) they can be of value.[650]

The anthropological insights gained from traditional Greek and Kenyan contexts, which have an eye to the social uses of food, offer a fruitful lens through which to read and interpret the literary texts of the Hebrew Bible that concern consumption.

One of the only explicit statements against over-eating occurs in Prov 25:16: 'If you have found honey, eat only what you need, lest you become engorged (תִשְׂבָּעֶנּוּ) and vomit it.' Immediately after, in v. 17, it then states 'Let your foot be seldom in your neighbour's house, otherwise the neighbour will become weary of you and hate you.' Honey then, is being used as an illustrative metaphor for social relations. While honey is a valuable, luxury food item elsewhere in biblical texts – highlighted here by the surprise of it being 'found' – too much of it can become a toxin. Similarly, imposing too much of yourself on a neighbour, although pleasant on occasion and a source of social support, may lead to you becoming a nuisance and a drain on their time and resources.[651] Comparably, in Prov 25:27 it states: 'It is not good to eat much honey, and he who searches for honour will be distressed'.[652] This too uses honey as a metaphor for social behaviour, warning that you can have too much of a good thing. These proverbs

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[650] Johanna Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution* (London: Continuum, 2002), 8, citing John J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1990) and Ken Stone 'Gender and Homosexuality in Judges 19: Subject-Honor, Object-Shame?', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 67 (1995), 87-107.

[651] Some ethnographic sources on food describe the way in which individuals may take advantage of the hospitality of others where it is custom to always offer food to guests or forbidden to eat in front of guests without inviting them to join you. See for example: Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes,* 140-143; Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts,* 47, 27.

[652] Translation following Andrew A. Macintosh, 'A Note on Proverbs XXV 27', *Vetus Testamentum,* 20 (1970), 112-114.

are using honey as a 'yardstick for the evaluation of social behaviour';[653] over indulging on something valuable, whether honey or your neighbour's hospitality, will lead to some form of punishment. Consumption is a bodily experience but is often also a social act, which makes it a reflexive metaphor or illustration for social behaviours. The body is a map on which wider social and cultural preferences are drawn, as I will consider later in this chapter.

Explicit laws or warnings against eating large quantities of food are absent from the Hebrew Bible, and so other more implicit indications of excessive consumption instead need to be considered. It may seem reasonable to think that growing fat indexes gluttony and thus was perceived negatively by biblical scribes. However, growing 'fat' has to be contextualised; in affluent modern Western societies, fatness is often associated with personality traits such as laziness, sedentary lifestyle choices or a lack of motivation and self-control. In the ancient world, however, fatness was more usually an indicator of health and quality; the fattiest portion of the animal was considered the best and therefore offered to Yahweh in biblical texts dealing with sacrifice.[654] The bountiful produce of the land is described as 'the fat of the land': חלב הארץ (Gen 45:18); אדמה שׁמנה (Neh 9:25), and is often paired with other positive words such as 'flourishing', רעננים (Ps 92:14), and 'sleek', עשׁת (Jer 5:28). These adjectives are aesthetic, qualitative indicators of abundance and richness. Accordingly, fatness does not appear to index overeating, but rather it signals the results of agricultural abundance, which is presented as divine blessing in the Hebrew Bible.

A closer reading of pertinent biblical texts suggests more complex socio-religious and cultural reasons for the negative portrayal of consumption. This brief review would suggest that when plentiful or luxurious foods and their consumption are presented negatively it appears to be the context, rather than the quantity being consumed, which is problematic. Below I will assess instances where food consumption is presented with criticism. The first of these instances is after Israel has been fed by Yahweh.

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[653] Tova Forti, 'Bee's Honey: From Realia to Metaphor in Biblical Wisdom Literature', *Vetus Testamentum,* 56 (2006), 338.
[654] Gen 4:4; Exod 29:13; Lev 1:12.

4.2 Excessive Consumption and Forgetting Yahweh

The so-called Song of Moses, in Deuteronomy 32, describes Yahweh feeding Jacob (Israel) in the wilderness:

> He set him atop the heights of the land,
> and made him eat[655] produce of the field;
> he suckled him with honey from the rock,
> with oil from the flinty boulder;
> curds from the herd, and milk from the flock,
> with fat of lambs and rams;
> Bashan bulls and goats,
> together with the choicest wheat—
> you drank foaming wine from the blood of grapes.[656]
> Jeshurun[657] (ישׁרון) grew fat (ישׁמן), and kicked (יבעט).
> You grew fat (שׁמנת), thick (עבית),[658] and fat-covered (כשׂית).[659]
> He abandoned God who made him,
> and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.[660] (Deut 32:13-15)

[655] The Samaritan Pentateuch reads the *hiphil* form, 'he made him eat', and the MT *qal* form is likely a later addition, see Paul Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32* (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 167-9.

[656] Diana Lipton raises the following question in relation to this line: 'viewed in the light of the Torah's frequent prohibitions against drinking the blood of slaughtered animals, the choice of terminology seems jarring. Wouldn't the negative association of blood rub off and compromise the wine-drinker's enjoyment?' *From Forbidden Fruit to Milk and Honey: A Commentary on Food in the Torah* (Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2018), 289. I would respond with an emphatic 'no!' Blood was a highly potent ritual substance and socio-religiously valuable. Evoking such connotations in the consumption of wine heightens the divine, high-status enjoyment of fermented grapes.

[657] Jeshurun is another name used to refer to Israel. It comes from the root ישׁר meaning 'upright' and is likely being used ironically here in the context of Israel being rebellious and growing fat.

[658] עָבִיתָ is probably better understood as 'thick' rather than 'bloated' based on its usage elsewhere such as 1 King 12:10b: 'My little finger is thicker (עבה) than my father's loins'.

[659] The translation of כשׂית as 'gorged' is based on an Arabic root meaning to be gorged with food according to Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 373. However, it has a similar root to כסה which means 'to cover' and is used to describe the covering of fat over animal kidneys: 'You shall also take the fat of the ram, the fat tail, the fat that covers (המכסה) the entrails, the appendage of the liver, the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, and the right thigh' (Exod 29:22). All three words in this line likely are synonyms for growing fat, which is hard to replicate poetically in English.

[660] For a thorough analysis of the Hebrew see Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32,* 167-81.

According to this text, Israel has committed the crime of forgetting Yahweh, set in the context of having grown fat. In a number of biblical texts Yahweh is repeatedly imaged as a provider, feeder, and nourisher,[661] while the Israelites are portrayed as arrogant, rebellious, and ungrateful for this sustenance.[662] The image of the Israelites becoming fat first serves to demonstrate the blessing and abundance Yahweh has bestowed upon them. However, it also conveys a false sense of security that leads them to abandon or disobey him. Yahweh expects that his provision of food and Israel's subsequent consumption will be socially reciprocated through obedience and remembrance of him as provider. Jeshurun's relocation from the chaotic wilderness to the ordered urban environs of Canaan allows him to grow and thrive in Yahweh's care until he bites the hand that feeds him. In this text Israel is dependent on Yahweh but he takes this dependence for granted.

As Israel grows fat he also forgets, which is surprising considering the relationship between food and memory. David Sutton has noted that food consumption (particularly at ritual or religious events) creates and perpetuates social memory:

> Food is equally important in creating prospective memories, that is, in orienting people toward future memories that will be created in the consumption of food. What is notable [in Kalymnian foodways] as well is the interdependence of ritualized memory and everyday memory in relation to food. In other words, it is not simply at 'loud' ritual occasions that food and memory come together, but in the pragmatic and the ritualized aspects of everyday life.[663]

Passover, for example, is one such 'loud' ritual occasion in which the Israelites were commanded to remember the Exodus from Egypt and consume food prepared in special ways, such as roasted lamb rather than boiled (Exod 12:9) and unleavened bread rather than risen (Exod 12:15, 20). Sutton observed this

[661] Deut 32:13-14; Exod 16:4, 12; Num 11:19-20; Neh 9:25; Isa 66:11-12; Ezek 16:13, 19; Hos 13:6.
[662] Deut 32:15; Neh 9:26; Ezek 16:15; Hos 13:6.
[663] Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts,* 28.

behaviour in his fieldwork on the Greek island of Kalymnos and saw that special meals were marked by going to 'extra trouble' in the preparation of common food items, in order to create patterned, and therefore memorable, variations.[664]

Paul Connerton defines this 'remembrance' as 'a technical term' that labels the experience of participants in the Passover meal who '…recall and recuperate in their present life the major formative events in the history of their community…to form a solidarity with the fathers…The generations in history hang together cultically'.[665] Specific foods are stipulated in order to ensure remembrance in the future; Sutton refers to this as 'prospective memory',[666] but it only stands out as memorable in the context of the everyday meals to which it bears similarity in structure.[667] Israel/Jeshurun's eating then likely refers to both everyday consumption and those specific ritual meals in which Yahweh should be remembered. But consumption in the Song of Moses leads to memory loss, rather than triggering and memorialising social memories or creating prospective social memories. The act of forgetting is religiously and socially transgressive, as it disrupts the social relationship between Israel and Yahweh, a relationship anchored in the remembering of Yahweh's acts.

As Sutton observes, 'food does not simply symbolize social bonds and divisions; it participates in their creations and re-creation'.[668] Food is an agent because rather than simply reflecting social bonds that 'exist' already outside of consumption activities, food participates in the constitution of those social relationships.[669] Milk appears to be particularly apt for the forging of memory and identity. It is a common motif that the land into which Yahweh brought the Israelites was promised to be flowing with milk and honey:

> For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I promised on oath to their ancestors, and they have

[664] Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts,* 108.
[665] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 46.
[666] Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts,* 29.
[667] Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts,* 108.
[668] Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts,* 102.
[669] Benjamin S. Orlove, 'Beyond Consumption: Meat, Sociality, Vitality and Hierarchy in Nineteenth Century Chile' in Jonathan Friedman ed., *Consumption and Identity* (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994), 122.

> eaten their fill and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, despising me and breaking my covenant (Deut 31:2).

Providing Israel with milk is repeated in a more intimate mode in the Song of Moses, where Yahweh is imaged as a maternal deity. Yahweh is the God who births Israel: 'You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth' (Deut 32:18). He also nurses Israel with honey from the crag and milk from the flock (vv. 13-14). Yahweh as maternal breast feeder is a particularly interesting image in the light of Cynthia Chapman's work on breast feeding as an act conferring identity from mother or wet-nurse to child. She demonstrates that in nursing narratives in the Hebrew Bible, such as those of Sarah and Isaac (Gen 21:7), Moses and his mother (Exod 2:7), and Naomi and Obed (Ruth 4:16-17), the breast milk serves to secure the baby's lineage as a true Israelite and therefore actively forges kinship.[670] In the Song of Moses, breast milk, or Yahweh's provision of milk in the land, is not just symbolic of Israel's status as his child and nation but actualises the generation of these bonded identities.

Like Jacob of Deuteronomy 32, the Kalymnians in Sutton's fieldwork are also at risk of forgetting their social memory and identity as a result of food. Kalymnians construct their identities through food-related activities such as paying the best prices at the market for ingredients, remembering recipes, and preparing food for visitors as a sign of hospitality. These are means by which Kalymnians compare themselves with persons from other Greek islands, or even other nationalities, who do not share this sense of pride and identity relating to food.[671] With the increase of supermarkets on the island, however, reliance on the receiving and giving of food amongst the community has receded, and in so doing has reduced food's ability, because of its purchased status, to produce memories and identities. Rather than valuing food because of the 'history of labor relations' that created it, and instead valuing food items based on their commercial market prices, Sutton states that there is 'a purposeful forgetting of

[670] Cynthia R. Chapman, '"Oh That You Were Like A Brother To Me, One Who Had Nursed At My Mother's Breasts." Breast Milk as A Kinship-Forging Substance', *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 12 (2012), 26-41.
[671] Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts,* 21, 25, 27, 49-50.

the pasts that went into the making of the present'.[672] The Kalymnians started to forget an aspect of their identity which was constructed by food because they no longer participated in the construction of their meals as they did before. So too do the Israelites in Deuteronomy 32 forget from where their food came and consequently they lose their social identity as Yahweh's children and nation. Eating has become anti-social for Israel.

Deut 32:17 continues by describing how Israel then worshipped other gods to whom they sacrificed:

> They sacrificed to lesser divine beings (שדים),[673] not God,
> to gods they had never known,
> to new ones recently arrived,
> whom your ancestors had not feared.

In this passage Israel's forgetting of Yahweh is contrasted with what I interpret as the scribe's attempt to force the forgetting of other gods which the Israelites' ancestors likely did know and worship. Connerton states:

> The attempt to break definitively with an older social order encounters a kind of historical deposit and threatens to founder upon it. The more total the aspirations of the new regime, the more imperiously will it seek to introduce an era of forced forgetting.[674]

The scribes write that the deities are new and thus inauthentic and illegitimate. In claiming that the Israelites did not know them before and that their ancestors never feared them, they are suggesting that the Israelites' memories are faulty; not only are they forgetting Yahweh, but they are also misremembering the beings they currently worship. As the deities are 'recently arrived' they have no link to the land; by contrast, Yahweh is 'indigenous' to the land and therefore is able to produce food from it. This text suggests that the new deities are

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[672] Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts,* 60, 64.
[673] Following Francesca Stavrakopoulou, *King Manasseh and Child Sacrifice: Biblical Distortions of Historical Realities* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), 273.
[674] Connerton, *How Societies Remember,* 12.

ineffective because they are not 'indigenous' and therefore have no connection with the fertility of the land. Only by challenging and dislodging these 'false' memories can the scribes create space for the new (or renewed) social identity and social relations with Yahweh.[675]

'Fat-covered' and 'thick' convey a similar meaning of physical change to the body (specifically an enlargement) after excessive eating. The phenomenon of growing large due to food consumption has been noted as one of the most tangible ways we can witness the fact that food is an agent.[676] This enlargement, in combination with the expression of Jeshurun 'kicking', evokes animalistic imagery, an impression noted by Samuel Driver:

> Israel, which ought to have been docile and obedient, like an ox – or perhaps a horse – that had grown fat and strong through good feeding, and had consequently become intractable, turned rebelliously against its Owner and Benefactor.[677]

The association between human fatness and animal fatness is discussed by Christopher Forth, who sees parallels between ancient texts from the Greco-Roman world that equate fatness with insensateness or dullness of the mind.[678] A similar concern is present in Isa 1:2b-3: 'I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.' Even the donkey knows where its food comes from, but Israel are characterised as Yahweh's unknowing and rebellious children, who no longer know the source of their nourishment.[679] While the ox and donkey are domesticated animals, Israel, the child found in the wilderness, is markedly undomesticated in comparison.

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[675] Sutton discusses the use of food in mortuary rites on Kalymnos to forget the dead in order to make space for new social relations in *Remembrance of Repasts,* 36-37.
[676] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 40-41.
[677] Samuel R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of Deuteronomy*, 3rd Ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 361; See also Nelson, *Deuteronomy,* 373: 'Fattened up, Jeshurun has a kick like an unruly animal'.
[678]Christopher E. Forth, 'The Qualities of Fat: Bodies, History, and Materiality', *Journal of Material Culture* 18 (2013), 147-8.
[679] Andrew Abernethy, *Eating in Isaiah: Approaching the Role of Food and Drink in Isaiah's Structure and Message* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 26.

Yahweh does not go through with the punishment of killing the Israelites, for fear that Israel's enemies may think they had defeated them through military action (32:27). This threat of death also appears to be more of a reaction to the rejection of Yahweh rather than the fat-inducing consumption. This story is reiterated in Neh 9:25-26:

> And they captured fortress cities and a fat land, and took possession of houses filled with all sorts of goods, hewn cisterns, vineyards, olive orchards, and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate, and were filled and became fat, and luxuriated themselves in your great goodness. Nevertheless, they were disobedient and rebelled against you and cast your law behind their backs and killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you, and they committed great blasphemies.

Similarly, here the scribe of Nehemiah admits that the consumption experienced by the Israelites was a blessing; they 'luxuriated' themselves in the 'goodness' Yahweh provided for them. Diana Lipton notes a paradox between Yahweh's provision of food in the wilderness and his provision in the land: 'In the desert, God's involvement is evident for all to see – how else could water come from a rock and manna from heaven? In the bounteous land, by contrast, God's hand is invisible, and therein lies the problem.'[680] It is not the consumption or the growing fat that is explicitly stated to be the wrongdoing. Instead it is the notion that despite the abundance from Yahweh, his people failed to acknowledge his provision and acted disobediently.[681] It is the failure to respond in the way Yahweh deems socially acceptable which is at issue.

Neither the Israelites' consumption of wine, meat, and grain, nor their fattened state, is inherently deviant; it is the way in which this consumption relates to their relationship with God that is troubling in such texts. Susan Hill proposes

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[680] Lipton, *From Forbidden Fruit*, 251.

[681] Sutton states: 'memories that are under threat may go underground, become hidden or fragmentary, as the dominant culture is replaced by the modernizing and standardizing of consumer culture'. Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts,* 64. There is an interesting parallel between the Kalymnians and the Israelites exposure to a 'culture' of luxurious consumption which did indeed lead to the fragmenting of memories pertaining to the source of that very 'consumer culture'.

that 'when humans become fat they reject God and render their society untenable' because they have possessed for themselves what actually belongs to Yahweh.[682] Another point of comparison with the Kalymnians is visible here. On Kalymnos fruits are seen as food items which cannot be bought and sold, but instead must be shared with others freely or else their possession is transgressive; fruits are perceived as being gifts from nature or God, and thus cannot be gifted because they are not owned by the giver (likewise, fruit trees cannot be sold but must be passed on to future generations).[683] The transgression is not the consumption of the fruit but the presumption of possession, as well as a neglect to properly acknowledge its origin and enact the appropriate behaviour surrounding its consumption.

Later in this same chapter of Nehemiah, Israel is cast as a stubborn animal: 'They turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey' (Neh 9:29b). This imagery evokes the behaviour of an animal who refuses to wear the yoke and pull the plough by stiffening its neck (cf. Ps 75:5; Isa 10:27; Jer 17:23, 28:14).[684] This metaphor is not dissimilar to the kicking animal imagery used in Deuteronomy 32 noted above. Again, the association between domesticated animals and being well-fed is evident. Indeed, King Eglon is described in Judg 3:17 as being בריא – meaning healthy and well-nourished – while his name itself stems from עגל, meaning 'bullock.'[685] A well-fed, strong, healthy animal was extremely valuable in pastoral economies, but if it became obstinate and refused to work the field then this could be a frustrating problem for the farmer. Yahweh's provision of food in the land is therefore a double-edged sword – on the one hand it leads to health and fatness, but on the other it triggers rebellion. MacDonald states that the abundance offered to the Israelites is a challenge for them because it is 'both threat and blessing';[686] the positive security from Yahweh risks leading Israel astray by causing them to forget the vulnerable state they would be in without him.

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[682] Susan Hill, *Eating to Excess: The Meaning of Gluttony and the Fat Body in the Ancient World* (Oxford: Praeger, 2011), 30.
[683] Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts,* 56-57.
[684] Johannes G. Botterweck and H. Ringgren eds. trans. D. Green, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, Vol. 7* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 391.
[685] Lawson G. Stone 'Eglon's Belly and Ehud's Blade: A Reconsideration', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 4 (2009), 649-663.
[686] Nathan Macdonald, *Not Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 85.

The Israelites also forget Yahweh after being fed by him in Hos 13:5-8:

> I knew you in the wilderness, in the land of drought. According to their pasture (כמרעיתם), so were they filled (וישבעו); they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore they forgot me. So I will become like a lion to them, like a leopard I will lurk beside the way. I will fall upon them like a bear robbed of her cubs, and will tear open the covering of their heart; there I will devour them like a lion, as a wild animal would mangle them.

Once again Yahweh finds Israel in the wilderness and provides them with nourishment, consequently leading them to forget Yahweh as the source of their security. It is important to state that the heart in the ancient world was understood as the seat of cognition and thought, as Francis Landy points out in relation to this verse: 'God's knowledge is matched by Israel's aphasia; the fuller and more exalted the heart, which in Hebrew is an intellectual as well as affective organ, the less it remembers.'[687] The language of pasturing the Israelites again animalises them: they become a flock of sheep who are vulnerable to the carnivorous predator. Ironically, Yahweh here is both shepherd, leading the flock to pasture, and predator – one ready to consume the animals who have departed from the care of their leader. As before, Israel is imaged as an animal who, once full (or fattened up), becomes disobedient due to their inability to understand or remember Yahweh's provision. When Yahweh is imaged as an animal, however, it is an entirely different animalisation; one of strength, power, and predation, which is threatening to the docile and stupid animal Israel. Isa 6:10 offers a similar correlation between fat and understanding:

> Make the heart of this people fat (השמן), and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

[687] Francis Landy, *Hosea* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 159.

This text suggests that having a fat heart impairs cognitive functions and the ability to recognise and know Yahweh. It is as if the somatic experience of being well-fed is antithetical to the social experience that consumption is ideally meant to foster.

The story of Yahweh's provision of quails in the wilderness (Numbers 11) is another instance of divine feeding that also has a subversive edge. Like Hos 13:8, it casts Yahweh as predatory rather than provisioning. After the Israelites have complained about the lack of meat, Yahweh sends quails, supposedly to satisfy their craving, but in actuality to punish them for their rebelliousness:

> You shall eat not only one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, but for a whole month—until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you—because you have rejected Yahweh who is among you, and have wailed before him, saying, 'Why did we ever leave Egypt?' (Num 11:19).

The destructive consequences in Hos 13:5-8 of Yahweh's care for the Israelites is mirrored here in Numbers 11, for the quail flesh kills each consumer before they have even had chance to swallow it (v.33). Some of the associated foodways of the Samburu of Northern Kenya can stimulate a reflection of this passage. In Samburu culture, illnesses may be caused by curses associated with food practices. One example occurred after the death of a man's bull. Traditionally, when an animal dies it is butchered and shared amongst the community. However, this man instead intended to sell the carcass for profit. The elders asserted that they should nevertheless be given one hind leg which was rightfully owed to them, but he still refused. The man took the meat to a butchery and sold it, but that night he became seriously ill, his stomach bloated, and he quickly died. Failing to treat food appropriately and acknowledge rightful ownership of food is the most common source of serious misfortune and curses for the Samburu.[688] Similarly then, the curse that falls on the Israelites, when they start masticating the quail meat for failing to appreciate Yahweh's provision

[688] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 136-7.

of manna, may be seen as an interrelated consequence of ignoring prescribed social practices surrounding food.

Significantly, another act of remembering occurs at the beginning of this quail incident in Numbers 11:

> The rabble among them had a strong craving; and the Israelites also wept again, and said, 'If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.' (Num 11:4-6)

The manna that the Israelites have before them as a result of 'murmuring' against Moses and God in Exodus 16 about their hunger has caused them to look back and remember Egypt more positively than they had previously. On a similar phenomenon in Kalymnos, Sutton comments:

> [Non-local] foods also provide opportunities for the play of imagination and the creation of different types of memories as well. In some cases, new foods revalorize old foods, and make these old foods epigrammatic of other temporalities, a site for what I have called 'memories of *gemeinschaft*,' or what are perceived by Kalymnians as compensatory memories for the trade-offs of modernity as they have experienced this process.[689]

The Israelites have re-evaluated and re-memorialised their time in Egypt and the food they ate there in the light of the manna they now have in the wilderness. These new memories seem brighter than both their present state and their past reality, which leads the Israelites to forget that Yahweh has already provided and cared for them. Their sensory recollections of the tasty fish, refreshing fruits, and fragrant onions and garlic are all-consuming for their minds; they have full memories on empty stomachs.

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[689] Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts,* 71.

Despite the miraculous manna, their counter-memories are rooted in bodily sensations, and yet they forget other aspects of Egypt: their enslavement, the drowning of new-born male Israelites (Exod 1:22), and Yahweh's liberating act through the crossing of the Sea of Reeds:

> All are pushed aside by the desire for food. Thus *bodily* memory – primarily of being fed or feeding – overpowers the more abstract memories that precede chapter 11, stories of historical events and of God's saving acts.[690]

Göran Eidevall points to the incident in Hos 13:5-8 as an 'inverted miracle' and it is reasonable to make a similar case for Numbers 11: 'If the act of feeding the flock in the desert (v. 5) can be called a miracle, this account of the surprisingly negative effects of pasturing might perhaps be termed a definition of an "inverted miracle".'[691] The provision of quails is certainly framed as a miracle demonstrating Yahweh's ability to meet the demands of the Israelites, but the resulting death subverts the presentation of Yahweh as a divine care-giver. This instance could be viewed as an intensified version of Deuteronomy 32: the moment their minds have gorged on the imagined delicacies of Egypt and disparaged the manna Yahweh gave them, they have already forgotten him. By rejecting Yahweh's food they reject Yahweh himself; their social relationship is truly disrupted.[692] The Israelites do not need to grow fat before forgetting Yahweh and rebelling; they only need to imagine that they would be fuller elsewhere, fed by a different hand.

The explicit correlation of having too much food and the danger of forgetting Yahweh is brought up in Proverbs:

> Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that I need, or I shall be engorged (אשׂבע), and deny you, and say, 'Who

[690] Adriane Leveen, *Memory and Tradition in the Book of Numbers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 83. Emphasis in original.
[691] Göran Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert: Metaphors, Models and Themes in Hosea 4-14* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1996), 196.
[692] Leveen, *Memory and Tradition,* 84.

> is Yahweh?' or I shall be poor, and steal, and profane the name of my God. (Prov 30:8-9)

Satisfaction or engorgement (שׂבע), a state that is seemingly desirable, is in this petition viewed as a gateway to hostility and religious deviance. As Leo Perdue states, 'satisfaction may lead to human arrogance and a forgetting or denial of God as the giver of sustenance'.[693] Whether Israel is figured as growing fat, full, or simply ingesting some fresh quail meat, the result is the same: the Israelites forget, so that 'super satiation weighs Israel down and contrasts with the lightness of their memory'.[694] However, Perdue's observations concerning human arrogance point to another episode of Yahweh's care-giving in the wilderness, found in Ezekiel 16:

> You had choice flour and honey and oil for food. You grew exceedingly beautiful, fit to be a queen. Your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty, for it was perfect because of my splendour that I had bestowed on you, says the Lord Yahweh. But you trusted in your beauty, and played the whore because of your fame, and lavished your whorings on any passer-by. (Ezek 16:13b-15)

In this account, an anthropomorphised Yahweh finds Israel, imaged as a female baby, bloody and flailing in a field (v.6). Yahweh then commands Israel to live and she grows until she is a sexually mature woman whom he then washes, dresses, and feeds (vv. 5-13). After feeding her flour, honey, and oil, Israel, rather than growing fat as Jeshurun did in Deuteronomy 32, grows to be 'exceedingly beautiful'. It is this beauty in which Israel trusts, but also leads to her forgetting Yahweh and turning to other gods – here couched in the language of sexual deviancy (Ezek 16:15-26). Ezekiel 16 is an infamous text, being the only passage banned from public reading by the rabbis (*Megillot* 4:10), and rightfully the subject of feminist critique.[695] I, however, will specifically

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693 Leo G. Perdue, *Proverbs* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2000), 259.
694 Landy, *Hosea,* 159.
695 For example, Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh's Wife* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); Cheryl J. Exum, *Plotted, Shot, and Painted: Cultural Representations of Biblical Women* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 114-17; Peggy L.

focus on the feeding of Israel which has not received as much attention as other aspects of this intriguing passage.

Jason Gile evaluates Ezekiel 16 and proposes that the scribes were expanding upon Deuteronomy 32, transforming it from a story in which Israel is Yahweh's rebellious son Jeshurun (Deut 32:5, 8) into a story in which Israel is his adulterous bride.[696] Being fed by Yahweh, then, is a fluid but meaningful and recognisable trope in both the Song of Moses and Ezekiel 16. Its enduring message that Yahweh's sustenance can lead to forgetting Yahweh demonstrates the ambivalence these ancient scribes held towards consumption. Growing fat or growing beautiful were desirable, and viewed as a blessing from Yahweh; both were a corporeal demonstration of abundance and wealth. Indeed, Israel's growth is described as the 'splendour' of Yahweh in v.14. At the same time such fattening from food could lead Israel to a sense of self-security or arrogance, and to mistakenly attributing that abundance, in the form of fatness or beauty, to herself rather than to Yahweh. The manifestation of divine blessing is the bodily transformation of Israel. It is imagined that Israel carries on, and in, herself the sustenance bestowed on her by Yahweh. It is perhaps because this food-security is experienced corporeally that there is a tendency to lapse towards believing that its provenance originates from the self. It is, however, Yahweh who creates this fattened, beautiful, and ultimately rebellious monstrosity; it is his feeding that leads to Israel's inability to then behave in the way Yahweh deems socially and religiously appropriate.

It has already been noted that the relationship between Israel and Yahweh is problematic because one side controls the other, for example:

> …the radically unequal power of the divine and human partners to this relationship distinguishes it from any ordinary relationship between individuals or groups of individuals. In particular, God,

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Day, 'The bitch had it coming to her: Rhetoric and interpretation in Ezekiel 16', *Biblical Interpretation* 8 (2000), 231-254. See also Johanna Stiebert's discussion of feminist approaches to Ezekiel 16 (and 23) in *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 129-51.

[696] Jason Gile, 'Ezekiel 16 and the Song of Moses: A Prophetic Transformation?' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130 (2011), 108.

> while a partner to the relationship, also retains the power to enforce its terms, to police and judge Israel's performance of its role within the relationship.[697]

The covenant relationship is not between two equal parties; it is imposed by one and responded to by the other. Naomi Graetz has also highlighted the similarities between real-life domestic violence and the monogamous marriage metaphor in Hosea.[698] She states:

> …the joyous reconciliation between God and Israel follows the exact same pattern that battered wives know so well. Israel is physically and psychologically punished, abused and then seduced into remaining in the covenant by tender words and caresses.[699]

The ways in which the power relationship between Yahweh and Israel verges on the disruptive and abusive in Ezekiel 16 is also reminiscent of a certain social dynamic surrounding food provision and body transformation in some Western societies. For example, feeder/feedee heterosexual relationships, in which typically male feeders derive sexual gratification from watching their typically female partners gain weight from excessive and dependent feeding. It goes without saying that I do not see the woman of Ezekiel 16 as an historical depiction of a real oppressed woman in the social reality of ancient Israel and Judah.[700] Rather, I want to use the feeder/feedee relationship here as a provocative tool to reflect on the metaphor in Ezekiel 16 with a new lens. Or as in Jonathan Z. Smith's words an 'exaggeration in the service of knowledge' rather than as an historical analogue.[701]

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[697] Louis E. Newman, 'Covenant and Contract: A Framework for the Analysis of Jewish Ethics', *Journal of Law and Religion* 9 (1991), 91-2.

[698] Naomi Graetz, 'God is to Israel as Husband is to Wife: The Metaphoric Battering of Hosea's Wife' in Athalya Brenner ed. *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 127-45.

[699] Graetz, 'God is to Israel as Husband is to Wife', 141.

[700] Johanna Stiebert, 'The woman metaphor of Ezekiel 16 and 23: A victim of violence, or a symbol of subversion?', *Old Testament Essays* 15 (2002), 204.

[701] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 52.

There is debate concerning whether feederism is simply an exaggeration of normative mate selection preferences; a form of sexual masochism; a transgression of societal norms that elicits sexual arousal; or, in some cases (where feeding leads to immobility) abuse. It is, however, clear that this sexualised consumption necessitates an imbalance of power as well as dependency on the feeder by the feedee.[702] In one study a male fat admirer and feeder is quoted saying:

> … fat creates a bond: she and I know that is my fat, that I fed her and that she has a belly now because of me (not only, of course, she wants it as badly as I want it). This bond is really nice, because it has been shared, every new pound of jiggly lard on her has been welcomes [*sic*] by me as the feeder.[703]

This respondent explicitly refers to the fat on his partner's body as being 'his fat' and states that she has a larger belly due to his actions. For this feeder the fat creates a social bond between him as the provider of that fat and his feedee as the bearer of that fat; a bond perhaps comparable to that shared between Yahweh and Israel. While this may be perceived as a 'bond,' it is also a power play in which the feeder is controlling the diet, weight, and body of another being. Even in modern Western contexts the relationship between the affluent, commercialised feeder and those who are fed, the consumers, harbours within it power play and dysfunction. Another study reports the following concerning another fat admirer and feeder:

> Calvin sees his wife as lacking self control and he can capitalize on it by giving her more food. Calvin portrays his wife as weak willed and gluttonous, perhaps to strategically place the blame on

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[702] Lesley L. Terry, Kelly D. Suschinsky, Martin L. Lalumiere and Paul L. Vasey, 'Feederism: An Exaggeration of a Normative Mate Selection Preference?', *Archives of Sexual Behaviour* 41 (2012), 249–260; Lesley L. Terry and Paul L. Vasey, 'Feederism in a Woman', *Archives of Sexual Behaviour* 40 (2011), 639–645; Viren Swami & Martin J. Tovée, 'Big Beautiful Women: The Body Size Preferences of Male Fat Admirers', *The Journal of Sex Research* 46 (2009), 89-96; Alyshia D. Bestard, *Feederism: An Exploratory Study Into The Stigma Of Erotic Weight Gain,* Unpublished Master's Thesis (University of Waterloo: Waterloo, ON. 2008); Kathy Charles and Michael Palkowski, *Feederism: Eating, Weight Gain, and Sexual Pleasure* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[703] Ariane Prohaska, 'Feederism: Transgressive Behavior or Same Old Patriarchal Sex?*'* *International Journal of Social Science Studies* 1 (2013), 109.

> her because of her perceived faults which deflects the blame from him…Calvin believes his wife is deserving of what she gets (fed more and more, gaining more and more) because he sees her as having a difficult time resisting food.[704]

In order to deflect guilt from themselves, feeders will accuse their feedee of deserving to gain weight even though it may be causing them severe health problems and even death.[705] The imbalance of power and abusive behaviour structuring these relationships is an unsettling feature evident in Yahweh's relationship with Israel; Yahweh is the cause of Israel's fatness. In Deut 32:13 the Samaritan Pentateuch reads 'he [Yahweh] made him [Israel] eat',[706] and yet Yahweh still blames Israel for the consequences of growing fat. Like feedees, Israel is completely dependent on Yahweh for food and yet the Israelites are also the recipients of his condemnation and punishment for the resulting embodiment of that food supply. The image of a whoring, fattened up bride in Ezekiel 16 may dovetail with Stiebert's suggestion that this text is an example of grotesque literature: 'The grotesque is characterised by exaggeration, hyperbolism and excessiveness, which are focused especially on the body and on bodily life… The grotesque serves to make the terror of catastrophe more bearable through the degraded, humanised and transformed characteristics.'[707] In the traumatic exilic context of Ezekiel then, Israel's grotesque enlargement and Yahweh's subsequent treatment may be accounted for.

Food distribution may be used to index infidelity. Israel uses the gifts from Yahweh to provide offerings to other deities rather than offering him food sacrifices:

> You also took your beautiful jewels of my gold and my silver that I had given you, and made for yourself male images, and with them played the whore; and you took your embroidered garments to cover them, and set my oil and my incense before them. Also my

[704] Bestard, *Feederism*, 133.
[705] Bestard, *Feederism,* 134-138.
[706] Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32,* 167-9.
[707] Stiebert, 'The woman metaphor of Ezekiel 16 and 23', 204-5.

> bread that I gave you—I fed you with choice flour and oil and honey—you set it before them as a pleasing odour; and so it was, says the Lord Yahweh (Ezek 16:17-19).

Becoming beautiful from the food Yahweh provides then leads to the pursuit and successful seduction of other divine lovers (cf. Hos 2:5-8). There are ethnographic examples which also depict a societal construction in which a wife's effort and time put into preparing food for her husband indexes her sexual fidelity. In certain Greek contexts, 'proper food' was only that which took hours to prepare; food that could be cooked quickly was referred to as 'prostitute food', because it implied that women were saving time in the kitchen to pursue illicit activities.[708] Similarly in Northern Kenya, Samburu women seen to be over-milking the cows of their husband's herd, likely to provide more milk for the children, are accused of having the 'immoral desire' to give this milk to their younger, *murran* (warrior class) lovers.[709] The account in Ezekiel 16 betrays similar jealousy on Yahweh's part; he has fed Israel choice foods – foods worthy of being offered to gods and goddesses – and yet she has not reciprocated. Providing food for other beings appears to epitomise the act of forgetting both the one for whom you should provide and the one who provides for you. Sociability with beings other than Yahweh cannot be tolerated by Israel's god.

Excessive consumption in the context of Yahweh as feeder and Israel as consumer is portrayed negatively because of the resulting forgetfulness and rebellion that being well-fed and self-secure breeds. The consumption itself, however, is perceived as a blessing bestowed upon the Israelites by Yahweh and is not in and of itself portrayed as evil, רע, the term used of the crime of the Rebellious Son (Deut 21:21). While most considerations of the case of the Rebellious Son have focused on his excessive consumption as the primary misdemeanour, there may be other associations, such as the behaviour that embodied fatness can provoke – namely forgetting Yahweh and worshipping other deities – that provide a more appropriate interpretation of the son's crime (this idea is further investigated in Chapter 6). There are other contexts in

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[708] Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts,* 132; Renée Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus,* 2nd Ed. (Oxford: Berghan Press, 1998), 150.
[709] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes,* 90-91.

Hebrew Bible texts in which excessive consumption appears to be condemned, to which I shall now turn.

4.3 Excessive Consumption in Elite Contexts

Excessive consumption would have been most possible in elite contexts, the elites being the members of ancient Israelite or Judahite society who had access to larger quantities of food than ordinary people who utilised a survival subsistence strategy. It is therefore perhaps not unsurprising that some protestations against higher levels of consumption in biblical texts are directed at the royal or ruling class.[710] While the priestly and prophetic spheres are not necessarily distinct, the cases discussed below appear to be derived from prophetic concern rather than those associated with the priestly or temple sphere. Excessive consumption is problematic for these prophetic voices because of the contexts in which the consumption occurs rather than the act of consumption itself.

In a vision of First Isaiah concerning the destruction of Jerusalem by Elam and Kir, both eating and drinking are condemned (Isa 22:12-13). Yahweh initially calls on the people to mourn and participate in the rituals of removing their hair and donning sackcloth; despite this, the people engage in the festivities of consuming meat and imbibing wine. Their justification, 'let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die', is suggestive of the desire to forget the approaching calamity and enjoy the present time. This seems doubly foolhardy. Firstly, by following Yahweh's request, the crisis may have been averted; it is not that the behaviours of drinking wine and eating meat are inherently disliked by Yahweh, but that they are not going to garner any favour in the context of Yahweh's desire for repentance. Secondly, it would be prudent for a city preparing for siege to ration both water and food, rather than to consume precious resources: 'Even in crisis, the rich elite of Jerusalem would not look beyond their own wants to the actual needs of the larger community dependent on them.'[711] The

[710] The text of Deuteronomy 32 discussed above may also fall into this category if Mark Leuchter's argument is correct; that the Song of Moses is about an Israelite king who has 'grown fat' with his own power to the dismay of the song's priestly author. See Mark Leuchter, 'Why is the Song of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy?' *Vetus Testamentum* 57 (2007), 316.
[711] Jimmy J. M. Roberts, *First Isaiah: A Commentary*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 289.

text alludes to the underlying notion that people in positions of authority, and therefore responsibility, should not disadvantage those reliant on them to pursue their own indulgent behaviours.

Recent anthropological work on feasting, helpfully analysed by Dietler, has identified three major classifications of feast: 'empowering feasts', 'patron-role feasts' and 'diacritical feasts'.[712] Diacritical feasts are those in which consumption is used as a 'symbolic device to naturalize and reify concepts of ranked differences in the status of social orders or classes'. Rather than using feasting events to create commensality and reciprocal bonds between differentiated social groups, these diacritical feasts are statements of 'unequal' and 'exclusive' membership in an elite group.[713] The diacritical dynamic of feasting is evident in Amos 6:4-7, in which the foods and other aspects of elite feasting are critiqued:

> Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory,
> and lounge on their couches,
> and eat well fed lambs[714] (כרים) from the flock,
> and fattened calves (עגלים מתוך מרבק); [715]
> who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp,
> and like David improvise on instruments of music;
> who drink wine from basins (מזרק),
> and anoint themselves with the finest oils,
> but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!
> Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile,
> and the *marzēaḥ* of the loungers shall pass away.

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[712] Michael Dietler, 'Theorizing the Feast: Rituals of Consumption, Commensal Politics, and Power in African Contexts' in Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden eds., *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2001), 75-89.

[713] Dietler, 'Theorizing the Feast', 85.

[714] כרים is usually used in conjunction with other fattened animals (Deut 32:14; 1 Sam 15:9; Ps 37:20; Isa 34:6; Ezek 39:18) whereas a lamb without this emphasised quality is usually designated with שֶׂה.

[715] Literally 'calves from the midst of the fattening stall'. A מרבק was a place where animals were tied in order to restrict movement and therefore fatten them up according to *BDB* s.v. מַרְבֵּק, 918. רבק is also the root of Isaac's wife's name, רבקה, which also demonstrates the ancient preference and esteem held for 'fat' as it was even desirable to name your child after fattened animals.

While it is likely that the author of Amos caricatures the feasting of elites here, it is the penultimate line of this excerpt that reveals why the activities of these people are reprimanded. Joseph (Israel) crumbles, the poor are oppressed and the vulnerable are wronged, while elites in their cities luxuriate in idyllic surroundings and occupy their time tinkering on musical instruments and consuming opulent foodstuffs. A diacritical feast indeed.[716] Dietler specifies that such feasts are differentiated by their high-status materiality, including:

> … rare, expensive, or exotic foods or food ingredients. Or they may be orchestrated through the use of elaborate food-service vessels and implements or architectonically distinguished settings that serve to 'frame' elite consumption as a distinctive practice even when the food itself is not distinctive.[717]

The setting of ivory couches, perhaps in a specific *marzēaḥ* house, testifies to the 'architectonically distinguished settings' that are typical of diacritical feasts. Paul Shalom comments anachronistically that 'these epicurean gourmets dine on nothing less than chateaubriand, or the most tender, tastiest, and choicest of meats'.[718] The sentiment is correct; young, well-fed lambs (כרים) rather than grown sheep (שֶׂה or צאן), and young fatted calves (עגלים מתוך מרבק) rather than grown cows (פרה) or oxen (שׁור or בקר), are consumed. The fact that the meat is of young animals demonstrates their high quality and expense, as they are not only tender but also have no other contributing role as they might in a subsistence-survival strategy; fattened animals that have been slaughtered while young will not only have been fed with a large amount of fodder to make them fat, but also will not have contributed anything back such as milk, wool, or traction power. The choice of language used by this scribe thus specifies and highlights the social and economic expense of the meat being consumed. These are animals raised to be eaten; they are not animals, as discussed in

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[716] Contra Carol Meyers who claims there are no diacritical feasts in the Bible, though she does not consider Amos 6:4-7 or the other passages discussed here in her paper: 'Menu: Royal Repasts and Social Class in Biblical Israel' in Peter Altmann and Janling Fu eds. *Feasting in the Archaeology and Texts of the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 144-147.
[717] Dietler, 'Theorizing the Feast', 86.
[718] Paul Shalom, *A Commentary on the Book of Amos* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 205.

earlier chapters, whose roles were primarily to provide the household with more sustainable contributions. The fattened animals are rare commodities, only affordable to elites who did not rely on a subsistence-survival strategy for food, as the majority of the population did.

Such purposefully fattened animals are typical of diacritical feasts; for example, in some Polynesian contexts, such as in Tikopia, female chiefesses regularly ate puppies raised in pens and fattened on special starch-rich paste, as a part of their diacritical consumption.[719] The use of food to construct difference in hierarchical status is also a feature of consumption in some traditional rural communities. Certain portions of one particular animal designate individuals as belonging to a certain social group or identity. For example, in Samburu, when a cow is slaughtered, the right side of the cow is for the *murran* (a warrior class of males), and the left side for the elders (former *murran*). The stomach and other internal organs are used for general family consumption with certain specifications; the back meat is for girls, the neck for women and the heart for the boys.[720] The fact that the ribs and hind legs, the best portions, are given to the older males demonstrates how specific food items inculcate prestige and status in the consumer, but at the same time all parts of the community have a share. This latter aspect – that all individuals gain a portion – is notably absent in the passage in Amos and is hence the reason for the scribe's complaints. In the Amos passage, there is no indication of any kind of division amongst the community, particularly non-elites, of the animals consumed.

As Dietler also articulates (above), it is not only food at an elite feast that creates this diacritical separation from the 'ordinary' people. Vessels, implements and the setting also establish an elevated distinction. The beds of ivory and the couches on which the feasters lounge in Amos 6:4 furnish the space of consumption; they are clearly manifestations of opulence and sophistication. Musical instruments, and by implication, those with the expertise to play them, accompany the consumption, further distancing this festal setting from that of most agricultural and pastoral gatherings. Claude Grignon

[719] Patrick V. Kirch, 'Polynesian Feasting in Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic, and Archaeological Contexts: A Comparison of Three Societies' in Dietler and Hayden, *Feasting*, 178.
[720] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 101.

comments that music or dance, in what he terms 'segregative commensality', 'enhances communicative exaltation, allowing a lowering of censure and reserve' which creates 'exceptional commensality'.[721] It may also be the case that music had a ritual or magical quality in these contexts, which would thus further serve to enhance the elite context of the festal setting. By strengthening the social bonds between the elites via music and other exclusive activities, the social bonds with other social groups are simultaneously weakened. This social consumption runs counter to the usual sense of commensality which stretches across social boundaries, and therefore reduces social barriers, at large community feasts. Here in Amos 6:4-6 the elite feasting serves to strengthen those distinct boundaries and separate disparate groups further still, by only participating in commensality amongst one's own elite social group.

The elites anoint themselves with 'the finest oils' in v.6. The act of anointing was also highly symbolic of an elevated, if not divine or sacred status. Only kings, priests, prophets and religious objects - including ritual food (Exod 29:2), altars (Exod 29:36), standing stones (Gen 31:13) the Tent of Meeting and the Ark as well as their cultic furnishings and utensils (Exod 30:25-7, 40:11) - were anointed with oil. For this ritual act to be carried out at a *marzēaḥ* feast is deeply suggestive of the extent to which this scribe wishes to portray the feasters as consecrated or 'set apart' from others. So too does the choice of vocabulary to describe the bowls from which the feasters drink wine allude to the unique nature of the consumption. The term מזרק is used 30 times in the Hebrew Bible for basins used in the Jerusalem Temple that were filled with fine flour and oil for the grain offerings to Yahweh.[722] Only in one other place is מזרק alluded to as a vessel containing wine: 'Yahweh of hosts will protect them, and they shall devour and tread down the slingers; they shall drink and roar (המו) as with wine, and be full like a basin (מזרק), drenched like the corners of the altar' (Zech 9:15). This imagery, however, is used to emphasise the fullness of a human after drinking, which means it is reasonable to assume that this usage is superlative because of the volume these מזרק basins could hold. The basin, as a cultic item,

[721] Claude Grignon, 'Commensality and Social Morphology: An Essay of Typology' in Peter Scholliers, *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe Since the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 29.
[722] Num 7:13, 19, 25, 31, 37, 43, 49, 55, 61, 67, 73, 79.

may render the feast deviant for this scribe.[723] The usual vessel used for drinking wine in the Hebrew Bible is a כוס; which is even used to describe Yahweh's cup of wine (Ps 75:8; Jer 25:15. 51:7). The elite feasters therefore appear to consume wine from a vessel which is both conspicuously large and conspicuously associated with the temple – and thus, is a symbol of divine consumption. The use of this lexeme indicates either that, the author(s) of this text is unaware of the names for non-temple vessels but wanted to demonstrate that a large vessel was utilised to emphasise the quantity of wine being drunk,[724] or this elite, ritual vessel was specifically chosen to further emphasise the high-status orchestration of the feast.

The *marzēaḥ* feasters' menu is certainly of high quality, but the menu is not the cause of the scribe's derision; rather, it is their apathy towards others that attracts criticism.[725] Grignon suggests that at such feasts, the elites' pleasure is exacerbated by the lack of those who are not participating:

> the group shows itself so freely to itself only because it is out of sight of strangers – what part of the memorable pleasure that the participants get from the meeting is due to the feeling of the deprivation of the 'others' (who do not even know 'what they are missing').[726]

If this sentiment is true, the elites may be experiencing increased levels of enjoyment due to the devastation which threatens Israel. In a similar vein, Yahweh directs this accusation at the city of Sodom in the book of Ezekiel: 'This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy' (Ezek 16:49). While the text does not state whether the elites of Sodom amassed their prosperity by exploiting the vulnerable, it is nevertheless seen as problematic by

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[723] Carey Ellen Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 213.
[724] See for example Gloria London, *Ancient Cookware from the Levant: An Ethnoarchaeolgical Perspective* (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2016), 17, where London suggests that scribes did not know accurate names for most cookware and other ceramics due to having little contact with potters and those who prepared food.
[725] Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 246.
[726] Grignon, 'Commensality and Social Morphology', 29.

the scribe that in their economic comfort no aid was provided for those in dire circumstances.

At feasts, individuals or small groups come together to form a larger gathering in which food is shared and bonds are thus constructed and maintained across social units. This promotes harmonious relationships and deters animosity or conflicts between groups. As Carol Meyers notes: 'these suprahousehold bonds were critical for community survival in the precarious subsistence economy of ancient Israel'.[727] The 'support network' created by the reciprocal commensality at feasts could be the difference between life and death in severe environmental conditions or times of disease, as each would likely feel indebted to one another and therefore obligated to lend aid. By excluding the most vulnerable groups at diacritical feasts, this vital commensality is subverted by the Israelite elites in these texts. At a time when so much food is accessible to the elites, shared consumption would be most beneficial to other struggling strata of society. But instead of enhancing community bonds and solidarity, the elites are purposefully fracturing the social network.

The idea that excessive consumption is problematic in a relational way to those who are not partaking in the same level of ingestion also seems to be the key issue in other prophetic texts. This point is made explicitly in Jer 5:26-28:

> For among my people are found wicked men*;*
> They lie in wait as one who sets snares;
> They set a trap; They catch men.
> As a cage is full of birds,
> So their houses are full of deceit.
> Therefore they have become great and grown rich.
> They have grown fat, they are sleek;
> Yes, they surpass the deeds of the wicked;
> They do not plead the cause,
> The cause of the fatherless;

[727] Carol Meyers, 'The Function of Feasts: An Anthropological Perspective on Israelite Religious Festivals' in S. Olyan ed. *Social Theory and the Study of Israelite Religion* (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 159.

Yet they prosper,
And the right of the needy they do not defend.

A caged bird is fed by its owner, it does not have to toil for food, and this perhaps suggests that these elites have also not worked for their fattening foods. Instead they have been satisfied through the exploitation of those more vulnerable, perhaps even committing fraud,[728] and the disregard of their duties to judge and defend properly. According to Jack Lundbom 'miscarriages of justice can usually be attributed to kings, royal officials, and elders sitting in the city gate. But a suspecting eye might also fall on financiers and profiteers of various sorts.'[729] Whilst Lundbom refers to this corruption as a violation of both 'covenant law and common decency',[730] Robert Carroll sees this more as a manipulation of social strata rather than a situation of 'apostasy'.[731] Growing fat at the expense and neglect of others is the issue here, rather than the consumption itself; that is not seen to be directly problematic for Yahweh.

A similar situation has emerged concerning the Samburu. Holtzman states that 'sharing is no longer community aid, but rather a means to strategically build and maintain alliances among a local elite.'[732] The increased reliance on purchased foodstuffs rather than the livestock economy has resulted in a decrease in inter-household food-sharing. The decline of the livestock economy, which caused the necessity to rely on purchased foods, is viewed as a punishment from their deity Nkai.[733] Selfishness with food, especially milk (which is seen as a gift from Nkai), results in Nkai also refusing to share milk with the Samburu. Sharing is traditionally seen as 'a safety net for the poor', as a drought or a case of animal poaching could cause even the wealthiest families to starve.[734] Emerging social stratification has transformed the way in which food-sharing is now viewed among the Samburu, where the rich share food with other rich people, and the poor are 'largely disregarded by those who are better

[728] William McKane, *A Critical Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah,* Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 133.
[729] Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20 A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Doubleday, 1999), 411.
[730] Lundbom, *Jeremiah,* 411.
[731] Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1986), 189.
[732] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 243.
[733] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 242.
[734] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 243.

off'.[735] It is particularly interesting that like Yahweh, Nkai is viewed as punishing those who do not provide for others who lack the necessary means to feed themselves. In this way food again acts as a social agent in that it not only has impact on the humans with whom you choose, or not, to share consumables, but also in that it impacts the way in which the deity treats you. Proper distribution of food thus carries with it both social and divine implications.

Amos 4:1 echoes the sentiments of other biblical examples: 'Hear this word, you cows of Bashan who are on Mount Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to their husbands, "Bring something to drink!"'. Violence against the poor is the order of the day; this abuse is what the biblical scribes believed was the cause of Yahweh's wrath and consequent punishment of the Israelite elites. Here, the elite women are specifically portrayed as entitled and ignorant in relation to their over-indulgence; they demand that their husbands serve them, when provisioning roles would usually have been a woman's domain. Interestingly, the modified status of women in elite festal settings is also a distinguishing factor in diacritical feasts. Rather than women being food preparers and servers, they become 'commensal partners'. In non-elite feasts there would be more defined differences in gender roles, in that women would facilitate consumption and men would gain reputation and prestige from their wife's efforts.[736] The indulgences of these elites are criticised only in the stark contrast of the oppressed, and possibly for their active implementation of exploitative ventures. Whilst it may appear that the elites are admonished because of their lifestyle, it is the surrounding, contrasting context of the helpless masses that makes it untenable and the target of rebuke.

In these texts, consumption in and of itself is not portrayed as evil, רע, the term used of the crime of the Rebellious Son (Deut 21:21). Rather, the issue in these texts is the socio-religious problems caused by ignoring those who require help from the wealthy members of society. By ignoring the plight of the poor, the elites also ignore Yahweh; they do not utilise food in the way Yahweh deems appropriate. The discussion of the proper social reactions to excessive food will continue as we turn to look at engorgement as blessing.

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[735] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 243.
[736] Dietler, 'Theorizing the Feast', 91.

4.4 Excessive Consumption as Blessing

> ‘So you will eat fat until you are glutted (לִשְׂבְעָה), and drink blood until you are drunk, from my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. You will be glutted (שְׂבַעְתֶּם) at my table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all the men of war’, declares the Lord God.[737] (Ezekiel 39:19-20)

The animals and birds invited by Yahweh to feast on the human corpses of Gog’s army in Ezekiel 39 are told that they will consume so much that they will be completely full or satiated. This verb, from the root שׂבע, is often translated ‘satisfied’, ‘full’ or ‘sated’ but, as noted by Richard Coggins, in reference to Joel 2:19, ‘“you will be satisfied” is something of an under-translation’.[738] It is clear that the intensity of Ezekiel’s vision of this great feast is emphasised by the voracious carnage of the army’s death and subsequent ingestion. The picture is meant to depict uncontrolled, animalistic ravaging of these corpses; to be denied a proper burial, and instead to become animal fodder or carrion which is later defecated, is a most extreme form of corpse abuse.[739] It is interesting that when Jeshurun in Deuteronomy 32 (discussed above) consumes excessively, he becomes animalised like a kicking ox, but when the animals are invited to feast by Yahweh they are effectively anthropomorphised; they become more human. To be consumed is anti-social, and to consume is to be social.

Some commentators have found the passage to be overly gruesome: ‘Even more revolting is the animals gorging themselves on fat and blood’, says John Wevers.[740] Similarly, Daniel Block remarks:

> The remainder of this frame paints a picture of unrestrained gluttony at Yahweh’s table. Yahweh encourages the beasts and birds to gorge themselves with the flesh…The literary images

[737] NASB translation.
[738] Richard J. Coggins, *Joel and Amos* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 46.
[739] See 2 King 9:36-37 where Jezebel’s corpse is eaten by dogs and later becomes dung. See also Francesca Stavrakopoulou*, Land of Our Fathers: The Roles of Ancestor Veneration in Biblical Land Claims* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 108-10.
[740] John W. Wevers, *Ezekiel* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1969), 294.

> sketched here must have been shocking for a person as sensitive to cultic matters as Ezekiel…How the priestly prophet reacted to this horrifying image one may only speculate.[741]

Offensive though these images may be to modern sensibilities they demonstrate the nature of the feast and perhaps the intention of the scribes to depict an element of horror and the grotesque. It is therefore clear that this particular verb שׂבע has been consciously selected to depict consumption of the highest degree. It is paralleled by the metaphor of (animals) drinking so much blood that drunkenness occurs; it is not just 'having enough,' this is feasting *par excellence*: eating until it is impossible to take another bite, and drinking until it is impossible take another sip. Similarly, the passage referring to the consumption of honey in Prov 25:16 also uses the verb שׂבע to refer to eating past the point of sufficiency: 'If you have found honey, eat only what you need, lest you become engorged (תשׂבענו) and vomit it.' Consequently, the translation 'engorged' or 'glutted' stands out as best capturing the sense of the verb, as it conveys the idea of going beyond the point of satiation to what I would term 'engorgement'.

Yahweh encourages this behaviour – he is sacrificing for their benefit (v. 19), and the result of this consumption is that his glory will be known among the nations (v. 21). In other texts, engorgement is also portrayed as a blessing or gift from Yahweh. In Jer 31:14 Yahweh says: 'I will drench (רויתי) the appetite[742] of the priests with fatness and my people will be engorged (ישׂבעו) with my bounty.' William Holladay comments that the verb רוה in the Pi'el stem is 'difficult to translate concisely' but suggests that, as it commonly means to 'drench' or 'water abundantly', 'to be "drenched with fatness" is a rich blessing indeed'.[743] This verb has the superlative sense of taking or holding the maximum amount possible; to be saturated or drenched means to be completely filled and unable to intake more. It therefore pairs well with the verb שׂבע in the following line, referring to the consumption of the people, as opposed to the priests in the first line. Carroll states: 'prosperity and cultic life belong together, so that the priests

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[741] Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25-48* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 477.
[742] נפשׁ here translated as 'appetite', following Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 594.
[743] William Holladay, *Jeremiah 2* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 186.

are sated with food and drink. All the scarcities of the past are disappeared in the great transformation of restoration to the homeland.'[744] Yahweh is presented as wanting his people to be able to eat to engorgement after the exile. There is no sense in which this consumption is seen as deviant or sinful. Indeed, in Joel it is the former state, of having no food, which is seen as shaming:

> I am sending you
> grain, wine, and oil,
> and you will be engorged (שׂבעתם);
> and I will no more make you
> a mockery among the nations.
> (Joel 2:19)

It is the restoration of food and the ability to eat as much as possible that enables the Judahites to be raised up as Yahweh's people, no longer ridiculed for their weakness and lack of food. While environmental conditions could cause famine, Peter Altmann has discussed how frequently human action, in the form of military defeat or war more generally, was also often a cause of food shortages in ancient southwest Asia. For example, war would divert attention away from the agricultural activity required to prevent food shortages. Being unable to destroy locust eggs at known hatching grounds, due to being engaged in war, led to outbreaks of plagues and subsequent famine.[745] Joel 1:4 and 2:25 comment on this destruction wrought by locusts and grasshoppers which is immediately followed by a reversal of the situation in 2:26: 'You shall eat in plenty and be engorged (שׂבוע), and praise the name of Yahweh your God, who has dealt wondrously with you.' Crenshaw notes that, like the locusts, Yahweh's people 'can eat voraciously, their ravenous appetite resulting from severe deprivation'. Similarly, in a list of praises to God in Ps 147:14, the psalmist reiterates the link between war and scarcity, in that during peace food is more readily available: 'He grants peace within your borders; he engorges you with the finest of wheat.' In the biblical context then, having no food appears to be a worse state of affairs than being able to eat excessively.

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[744] Carroll, *Jeremiah,* 594.
[745] Peter Altmann, 'Feast and Famine: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives on Lack as a Backdrop for Plenty in the Hebrew Bible' in Altmann and Fu, *Feasting in the Archaeology and Texts,* 165.

There is a story from the Samburu that a transport lorry containing hundreds of sheep and goats once overturned, allowing the animals to escape unharmed into the surrounding thicket. Many of them were unable to be retrieved and were left to live in the bush. When Samburu men heard of these wandering animals many abandoned their jobs, jobs which they had taken as a result of the declining livestock economy which the Samburu were traditionally dependent on, in order to hunt the animals. The men stayed in the bush for several months 'eating goat after goat after goat, until the last had finally disappeared into the sated stomachs of the men. This decision was deemed to be sensible; it was necessary to put on weight in the midst of scarcity. [746] The Samburu men ate to engorge and enlarge themselves. This story is a parallel phenomenon to the consumption and engorgement of the Israelites found in biblical texts when previously famine had been prevalent. When an abundance of food becomes available, it may be necessary to consume as much as possible, because more challenging times may well be ahead.

Indeed, Ps 37:19 reads: 'Yahweh knows the days of the blameless, and their heritage will abide forever; they are not put to shame in evil times, in the days of famine they will be engorged.' In a context in which the norm is scarcity and survival-subsistence strategies are implemented to maintain security in the resource base of the household, having enough food to become engorged was likely imagined to be a blessing. It is unlikely that given the opportunity, eating large amounts of food would ever be discouraged as being an 'immoral' act for most ordinary Israelites.[747] This blessing is articulated most clearly in Deut 11:13-15:

> If you will only heed his every commandment that I am commanding you today—loving Yahweh your God, and serving him with all your heart and with all your soul— then he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil; and

[746] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes,* 161-2.
[747] For the elites this is slightly different as discussed in the previous section on elite feasts where the poor and vulnerable are being neglected.

> he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you will eat and be engorged.

In this text, engorgement – and the circumstances it requires – results from obedience to Yahweh's laws. The divine blessing of rain allowed for the continuing fertility of the land, crops, and animals – and therefore, the people. By behaving in the correct social way, through obedience to the law, Yahweh's response is the reward of plenty. Lipton comments: 'This focus on food as an incentive or bargaining tool is hardly surprising. Nothing else in an agrarian society is at once so absolutely essential and so obviously beyond human control.'[748] Fertility, and the resulting ability to eat and become engorged, is overwhelmingly positive; the people are not discouraged from enjoying the bounty of the Promised Land. 2 Chr 31:10 mentions this kind of phenomenon in regard to temple offerings in Jerusalem:

> The chief priest Azariah, who was of the house of Zadok, answered him, 'Since they began to bring the contributions into the house of Yahweh, we have eaten and become engorged and have plenty to spare; for Yahweh has blessed his people, so that we have this great supply left over.'

The priests have had a seemingly unending supply of food from the contributions of the people to the temple due to the blessing of Yahweh. As the people have obeyed the command to bring their first fruits offerings as portions for the priests and Levites (31:4-5), Yahweh's promise to send rain for the grain, wine, oil and livestock has been fulfilled, allowing the priests to engorge themselves with surplus left over. In this depiction, the people have responded adequately both to Yahweh's command and to each other by dispersing shared resources among themselves. Consequently, Yahweh has provided food in excess.

In other biblical texts this blessing of abundant food is more specifically aimed at the poor and vulnerable: 'the poor shall eat and be engorged (וישבעו); those

[748] Lipton, *From Forbidden Fruit,* 254.

who seek him shall praise Yahweh. May your hearts live forever' (Ps 22:26). Similarly, Ps 132:15 states: 'I will abundantly bless its provisions; I will engorge (אשׂביע) its poor with bread' (cf. Ps 37:19). This verse 'depicts the temple as the place where YHWH shows himself to be the generous host (cf. Psalm 23) especially for the poor'.[749] However, it is not just Yahweh who must care for the vulnerable or starving; in Deuteronomy the feeding and engorgement of these people is ensured by including the following commandment:

> Every third year you shall bring out the full tithe of your produce for that year, and store it within your towns; the Levites, because they have no allotment or inheritance with you, as well as the resident aliens, the orphans, and the widows in your towns, may come and eat and be engorged so that Yahweh your God may bless you in all the work that you undertake. (Deut 14:28-29)

While this passage may be utopian and idealistic in tone, it may also convey the idea that Yahweh's blessing of plentiful food was not meant to be restricted to the elites, but shared out to those who may not have directly benefited. Richard Nelson keenly observes that 'these laws concerning the tithe have a conservative flavour, placing the burden of social support entirely on the farmer, while ignoring artisans, merchants and officials.'[750] This sentiment is in line with the work of Douglas Knight, who employs critical legal theory to argue that most laws, while appearing to be for the benefit of the people, actually serve those who wrote them.[751] The poorer segments of the community may be aided by this allocation of Yahweh's blessing in this text, but it would also be the temple specialists, the priests, Levites, and other ritual functionaries, who benefitted from the work of the agriculturalists and pastoralists of Judah. In spite of this, it is at least possible to say that the biblical scribes present the notion of Yahweh's promise and blessing for plentiful food as having a universal application. In Isa 58:10-11 this care for the poor is encouraged by way of promising that Yahweh will return the gesture:

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[749] Frank Lothar Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalms 3,* trans. L. M. Maloney (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 2011), 132.
[750] Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 183.
[751] Douglas Knight, *Law, Power and Justice in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 26, 248.

If you offer your food to the hungry
and engorge the appetite of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.
Yahweh will guide you continually,
and engorge your appetite in parched places,
and make your bones strong.

This reiterates the point made earlier that proper food usage has both social and divine repercussions. Here those repercussions are positive and focus on the physiological impact food has on the body. If the wealthy ensure the poor are nourished, then Yahweh will make the wealthy strong should they ever find themselves without food. In this way, social relationships that cross the boundary between the elite and the poor are encouraged in the text by emphasising the social impact such activity has on Yahweh's sociality with the wealthy. While the poor may be dependent on the wealthy, the wealthy are still dependent on Yahweh in this entanglement.

Yahweh also draws a distinction between food he can provide and food that might be purchased, likely by wealthy elites:

Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labour for that which does not engorge?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in fatness. (Isa 55:1-2)

In this passage, food functions as a metaphor for Yahweh's covenant; though the food the Israelites are eating does not quench their thirst or engorge them,

the food of Yahweh's everlasting covenant will be rich and fat (55:3-13). Listening to or obeying Yahweh is the key to consumption which engorges. Implicit here is the idea that disobedience, and a reliance on one's own wealth to purchase foods, will not be as satisfying. John McKenzie also notes:

> The prophet no doubt looks beyond material provisions, but food and drink are not a mere metaphor for such things as revelation. Food and drink provided by the deity have a wonderful character, and the fact that they are provided attests to the relations between Yahweh and his people.[752]

Indeed, feasting with Yahweh at his invitation serves to strengthen commensality between him and his guests. In another text, describing an eschatological feast, possibly at an enthronement ritual, all people will be present:

> On this mountain Yahweh of hosts will make for all peoples
> a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
> of rich food filled with marrow,
> of well-aged wines strained clear. (Isa 25:6)

Andrew Abernethy has argued that this feast could be thought of as a subversion of the diacritical feast type, in that the food and drink consumed is 'fancy', but the extension of the invitation to the masses subverts the usual distinction between participants and non-participants.[753] I critique this interpretation on the basis that rich food is also a feature of patron-role feasts at which a leader provides 'lavish hospitality' for his guests in order to reinforce his role as their leader. A patron-role feast encapsulates 'unequal relations of status and power and ideologically naturalizes it'; guests accept their subordination and leaders accept the continual responsibility for the people.[754] Also, the invitation to the feast is not extended to all, as Abernethy insists, because mere

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[752] John L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah* (Warden City: Doubleday, 1968) 143.
[753] Andrew Abernethy, 'Feasts and Taboo Eating in Isaiah: Anthropology as a Stimulant for the Exegete's Imagination,' Paper given at Society for Biblical Literature Annual Meeting 2016, San Antonio, Texas.
[754] Dietler, 'Theorising the Feast, 83.

verses later it states that at the same time as everyone is on the mountain enjoying this feast, Yahweh will trample Moab like straw in a pile of dung (v. 10). Nevertheless, this text demonstrates that feasting on rich food was a blessing from Yahweh, rather than being excessive and something to be punished:

> On the occasion of Yahweh's enthronement a share in the great sacrificial meal will be given both to foreign pilgrims to the festival as well as to the Jews themselves…This table fellowship brings the nations into fellowship with God.[755]

Eating with Yahweh builds commensality with Yahweh, and thus brings knowledge of him; it is to this that we shall now turn.

In the account of the wilderness wandering in Exodus, the Israelites complain they do not have enough food and wish to be back in Egypt where they 'sat by fleshpots' (Exod 16:2-3). Yahweh provides them with quails for meat and 'manna' for bread, stating:

> I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be engorged (תִּשְׂבְּעוּ) with bread; then you shall know that I am Yahweh your God' (Exod 16:12).

Fullness, or engorgement, from food provided by Yahweh inculcated the knowledge that Yahweh was the Israelites' God: 'The result of [the meat and bread] will be an experiential knowledge that Yahweh is their God'.[756] It is through eating the sustenance provided by Yahweh, by having an embodied experience of engorgement created by Yahweh's bounty and the fertility he bestows on the land, that the Israelites are able to socially and ritually respond the way Yahweh desires. Engorgement stops their 'grumblings' and suspends their negativity concerning their present state in the wilderness; they behave better.

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[755] Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39,* trans. R. A. Wilson (London: SCM, 1974), 200.
[756] John I. Durham, *Exodus* (Waco: Word Incorporated, 1987), 220; See also Brevard Childs, *Exodus: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster, 1974), 288.

In Samburu culture, there is a general perception that certain foods influence behaviours in either positive or negative ways. Some Samburu believe that pastoral foods, that is, foods from animals, 'create inherently better behaviour' and 'an internal state conducive to morality'.[757] One Samburu states: 'When you are healthy you have a sense of respect and shame, but when you are thin and hungry you can eat anything. You don't fear anything or anybody.'[758] The hunger of the Israelites leads them to effectively have no fear of Yahweh. This leads them to complain and show disrespect for Yahweh by accusing him of leading them into the wilderness to die (v.3). Once, however they have been fed by him, they are no longer hungry and consequently, through that consumption, a social relationship is constructed with him. When the Samburu had a large amount of available meat and milk there was more than just a nutritional benefit. The social and emotional results were also tangible, people's hearts were described as 'good' and 'full of spirit'; some people 'shined' and enjoyed singing.[759] Being engorged with Yahweh's food is portrayed just as positively in Hebrew Bible texts; the Israelites fear, respect and praise Yahweh. Ps 63:2-5 likens the joy of seeing Yahweh's power and glory in the Temple to having consumed rich food: 'So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name. My appetite is engorged as with fat and fatness and my mouth praises you with joyful lips' (vv. 4-5). Praising Yahweh as a result of engorgement also occurs in Joel 2:26: 'You shall eat in plenty and be engorged, and praise the name of Yahweh your God, who has dealt wondrously with you.' In these texts, experiencing Yahweh's bounty in a bodily way, through engorgement, is equivalent to knowing that, as the provider of that experience, Yahweh is God: 'The satisfaction of knowing God's nearness is compared with being a guest at a banquet feasting on the choicest foods.'[760] According to these texts, the spiritual and material gifts of Yahweh are inextricably linked and cannot be extricated.

[757] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 173.
[758] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 173.
[759] Holtzman, *Uncertain Tastes*, 51.
[760] John W. Rogerson and John W. McKay, *Psalms 51-100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 66; See also Marvin Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (Waco: Word Incorporated, 1990), 128.

This pattern of eating, engorgement, and praising, also seen above in Exod 16:12, is emblematic of the idea that it is through experience that knowledge is gained – in this case knowledge of Yahweh, who must then be praised.[761] This pattern occurs again in Deut 8:10: 'You shall eat and become engorged and bless Yahweh your God for the good land that he has given you'. This statement is followed by the reminder that being engorged can also lead to forgetting Yahweh (vv. 11-12), as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. This therefore brings us full circle to the idea that consumption is ambiguous; while Yahweh's bounty is seen as a blessing, and something that all should have access to, it is also portrayed as a challenge. Yahweh provides manna for the Israelites in the wilderness; on the one hand to feed them, but on the other, to test them; that is, they must use his gift *in the right way*:

> Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not' (Exod 16:4).

This example is possibly paradigmatic for Yahweh's provision of food on the macro level: the Israelites must remember the source of their engorgement and therefore it must be used it the way Yahweh specifies as appropriate.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has explored the ways in which certain biblical texts critique excessive food consumption. For most Israelites and Judahites, having enough food was a central concern and therefore abundance was viewed as a divine blessing. For the elites, on the other hand, rare and expensive foods, as well as luxurious dining environments, were enjoyed at the expense of the poor and vulnerable citizens around them. Such is the core biblical criticism of their consumption; feasting in and of itself was seen to be a positive occurrence that fostered commensality and security amongst and between social groups. The

[761] Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, trans. W. Janzen, S. D. McBride Jr. and C. A. Muenchow (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 64-65.

subversion of this practice by excluding non-elites was therefore threatening to society as a whole, and something which also seemed to subvert socio-religious ideals about Yahweh's bounty being accessible for all. At the same time, consumption must always involve remembering where food originates from, as demonstrated by David Sutton's work. Food is inherently bound up with memories; the Israelites, however, are tempted to attribute their corpulence to themselves rather than to Yahweh. This forgetfulness is why consumption in biblical texts is portrayed ambiguously, because engorgement is also the way to knowing and remembering Yahweh. Nevertheless, these instances of excessive consumption are not deemed deviant in themselves, and are certainly not portrayed in a comparable way to the crime of the Rebellious Son. Consumption comparable to the crime of Deut 21:18-21 will therefore be taken up and examined in Chapter 6, after excessive alcohol consumption in the Hebrew Bible has been explored.

Chapter Five: Excessive Alcohol Consumption in the Hebrew Bible

5.1 Overview

The Rebellious Son is typically understood to have been guilty of the excessive consumption of alcohol (Deut 21:18-21). In order to explore the connotations of the excessive consumption of alcohol for biblical scribes, it is necessary to examine occurrences of excessive alcohol consumption across biblical texts. There are no proscriptions for drinking alcoholic beverages for ordinary people. Instead, two specific groups of people are targeted, both of whom share common characteristics.

First, the sons of Aaron, and by implication any priest, are commanded not to drink wine or beer when entering the tent of meeting (Lev 10:9). This instruction is an anomaly as it does not occur anywhere else in Levitical texts. In this narrative (Lev 10:1-9), two priestly sons offer the wrong kind of incense to Yahweh and are subsequently killed by him for this deed. The implication is that under the influence of alcohol priests cannot properly carry out cultic duties (Lev 10:9-10). This suggestion will be discussed further below and in Chapter 6. Second, the Nazirite, or the pregnant mother who is to dedicate her child to be a Nazirite, is expected to abstain from wine, beer and any grape products (Num 6:3-4; Judg 13:7). Both the priest and the Nazirite are set apart from ordinary people in the biblical texts, for they are more closely related to the cultic sphere and therefore to Yahweh.[762] In the same way, priests and Nazirites are also prohibited from having contact with the dead according to biblical texts (Lev 21:1-6; Num 6:6), thereby preventing both priests and Nazirites from attending central social events. As Susan Niditch points out: 'To attend to the dead and to share in the drinking of wine are quintessentially social occasions, signals of kinship and community, so that nonparticipation in these events sets the Nazirite apart from quotidian social intercourse.'[763] In Num 6:20, the text

[762] Note also Amos 2:12 which seems to align the Nazirite with some kind of prophetic role which appears to be obstructed when alcohol is consumed: 'But you made the Nazirites drink wine, and commanded the prophets, saying, "You shall not prophesy."'

[763] Susan Niditch, *The Responsive Self: Personal Religion in Biblical Literature of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 82.

announces that the Nazirite can drink wine after the vow has ended.[764] This appears to signify the return to the social collective which entails commensal drinking at gatherings including those relating to the dead. Prohibiting the consumption of wine thus only appears to be of concern to the elite scribes if it has a potential impact on the management or representation of the cult. For the non-cultic, drinking alcohol is accepted, normative, and socially expected behaviour.

The reasons for the prohibition of alcohol consumption in these cultic contexts might well be related to the consequences of alcohol's psychoactive quality and the physiological effects it has on the body. Indeed, Prov 23:29-35 describes some of the experiences of alcohol consumption:

> Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
> Who has strife? Who has complaining?
> Who has wounds without cause?
> Who has redness of eyes?
> Those who linger late over wine,
> those who keep trying mixed wines.
> Do not look at wine when it is red,
> when it sparkles in the cup
> and goes down smoothly.
> At the last it bites like a serpent,
> and stings like an adder.
> Your eyes will see strange things,
> and your mind utter distortions.[765]
> You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea,
> like one who lies on the top of a mast.
> 'They struck me,' you will say, 'but I was not hurt;
> they beat me, but I did not feel it.
> When shall I awake?
> I will seek another drink.'

[764] Beer and grape products are not mentioned in the verse.
[765] NRSV renders תהפכות 'perversions' but this is an unnecessarily loaded word.

The physiological phenomena described here appear to include the way in which alcohol can lower one's mood and cause a host of unpleasant experiences. The implication of 'Who has wounds without cause?' may be that one wakes up with injuries that they do not remember sustaining. Although wine may 'go down smoothly' in the moment, and looks aesthetically pleasing, this proverb asserts that in the end it will cause the drinker harm.[766] The description of those who stay up late into the night drinking and getting red eyes may refer to tiredness, but this may also be alluding to the lack of clarity not just of physical but prophetic vision. Indeed, the reference to seeing 'strange things' and uttering 'distortions' is likely a reference to 'false' divination. This may account for the biblical ban on cultic personnel consuming alcohol. As a mediator between God and humans it is not deemed appropriate for someone in such a role of responsibility to be defective in facilitating this two-way communication (to be discussed in further detail below).

A related narrative occurrence of the issue of communication is that of Hannah in the temple at Shiloh. The priest Eli sees Hannah's mouth moving and he thinks she is drunk:

> As she continued praying before Yahweh, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk. So Eli said to her, 'How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine.'

This kind of behaviour was apparently not usual unless under the influence of alcohol, or alternatively, Eli was so corrupt by this point that he could no longer recognise true piety and instead mistook her behaviour for drunkenness. [767] However, as the future bearer of the priest and prophet Samuel, Hannah is already demonstrating her propensity to communicate with the divine, a trait

[766] Underlying connotations of 'bites like a serpent, stings like an adder' provoke the reader into remembering the serpent in the Garden of Eden; alcohol too can be deceiving. Its consumption is tempting just as the fruit was, but the difference is that in the garden the snake miscommunicated the effects of consumption, whereas the effect of alcohol is to distort communication itself.
[767] David G. Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2009), 57.

which Samuel will inherit. Hannah demonstrates her suitability for carrying such a child while Eli deems what he perceives as a drunken spectacle to be inappropriate in the midst of the cult. Alcohol appears to be perceived as an inhibitor to appropriate communion with the divine.

The sensation of lying down in the midst of the sea likely refers to dizziness and staggering caused by the imbalance resulting from consuming alcohol. This sense of disorientation or imbalance is one of the most common physical descriptors of drunkards in the Hebrew Bible (note, for example, Job 12:25: 'They grope in the dark without light; he makes them stagger like a drunkard', and also Ps 107:27: 'they reeled and staggered like drunkards'). However, this imagery of the sea also evokes the mythic chaos associated with the sea and the sea god Yamm. To lie down in the midst of chaos is to be without the order of Yahweh, to be separated from him and his ritually structured and stable world. Again, alcohol appears to be cast as a substance that distances the priest, prophet or Nazirite from Yahweh when they are meant instead to be separate from the people in order to be closer to him. Losing the ability to feel the sensation of pain when struck or beaten is another quality associated with drunkenness in the above passage from Proverbs. To sustain injuries is to become blemished and being blemished relinquishes the priest of his status as whole.[768] A blemished priest has reduced cultic privileges (Lev 21:16-23) which in particular limit a priest's ability to draw near to Yahweh.[769]

It is clear why scribal elites were concerned with the explicit prohibition of alcohol for individuals who had responsibilities associated with Yahweh. While the Proverbs text is not explicitly directed at cultic specialists, the text does draw on elite, high status motifs which likely points to concern about cultic alcohol consumption. Most cases in which drunkenness is described in the Hebrew Bible seem to occur in specific circumstances. Therefore, the specific contexts in which drunkenness is portrayed in biblical texts will be explored.

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[768] On the dyad of Whole/Blemished see chapter 4 of Saul M. Olyan, *Rites and Rank: Hierarchy in Biblical Representations of Cult* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 103-114.
[769] For example, a blemished priest cannot approach the altar of burnt offerings to bring Yahweh's sacrifices or approach the curtain of the Holy of Holies or enter the Holy of Holies itself which in the text is conceptually seen as the closest place on earth to the divine. Note that in Zech 13:2-9 ritual body cutting was a part of prophetic practice and so priestly 'wholeness' may be in direct opposition to these activities.

5.2 Drunkenness in Elite Contexts

Drunkenness appears to be presented as most detrimental and harmful when it impacts those in positions of responsibility and authority. The potential for this to occur was likely quite high as people in such positions also belonged to the wealthier portion of the Israelite or Judahite population. Being wealthy meant greater access to large amounts of alcohol, particularly wine, as well as the freedom to spend time recreationally. This disparity between the rich and the poor is seemingly acknowledged by the King's Mother (v. 1) in Prov 31:4-9:

> It is not for kings, O Lemuel,
> it is not for kings to drink wine,
> or for rulers to desire beer;
> or else they will drink and forget what has been decreed,
> and will pervert the rights of all the poor.
> Give beer to one who is perishing,
> and wine to those with a bitter heart;
> let them drink and forget their poverty,
> and remember their misery no more.
> Speak out for those who cannot speak,
> for the rights of all the destitute.
> Speak out, judge righteously,
> defend the rights of the poor and needy.

There is an apparent anxiety in this text that the kings and rulers who spend too much time drinking beer and wine will be unable to perform their duties satisfactorily. Inebriation may cause rulers to forget what has been decreed, which could harm those in poverty. This forgetting is an interesting parallel to the forgetting of Yahweh after growing fat on his nourishing food (as discussed above). Here drunkenness also leads to forgetting, but in this case it is forgetting how to rule according to Yahweh's will. To judge justly or righteously is to maintain order and prevent chaos from creeping in as a result of injustice and civic unrest. Instead, a good king or ruler should protect those who are

vulnerable and defend them: ‘the verses urge the king to open his mouth not to drink but to speak for the voiceless and poor’.[770]

The passage then continues to explain that alcohol need not be avoided by the poor themselves. Rather, drinking may aid the poor in forgetting their troublesome situations. The passage is a neatly structured instruction: kings should not drink so that they do not forget the poor while the poor should drink so that they may forget. It suggests that those that do not have voices, who do not have a responsibility to communicate on behalf of the divine in order to perform divine justice, do not risk adulterating their ability to carry out this role of mediation. There is, however, a sinister edge to this passage which has been highlighted by Johanna Stiebert: the King’s Mother, in her position of wealth and privilege, does not display genuine concern for the poor, but instead offers alcohol as a means to silence the desperate pleas of the downtrodden.[771] Indeed there are self-interests at play here, as drinking to forget the woes of poverty means the poor masses will not rise up against the wealthy. Thus, while both instructions may superficially aim towards the maintenance of social order from the perspective of the royal elite, there is a failure to carry out real, tangible justice. True suffering is not alleviated by simply handing out wine and may instead actively contribute to continued oppression.[772]

The book of Isaiah includes several rebukes regarding people in positions of authority who get drunk. Isa 5:11-12 emphasises the revelry and frivolity of elites who are able to drink from the early morning until night:

> Woe to you who rise early in the morning
> in pursuit of beer,
> who linger in the evening
> to be inflamed by wine,
> whose feasts consist of lyre and harp,

[770] Richard J. Clifford, *Proverbs* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 270.
[771] Johanna Stiebert, ‘The Peoples' Bible, *Imbokodo* and the King's Mother's Teaching of Proverbs 31’, *Biblical Interpretation* 20 (2012), 271-5. Citing M.K. Nzimande, *Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation in Post-Apartheid South Africa: The Gebirah in the Hebrew Bible in the Light of Queen Jezebel and the Queen Mother of Lemuel,* Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, 2005).
[772] Stiebert, ‘The Peoples' Bible’, 272.

tambourine and flute and wine,
but who do not regard the deeds of Yahweh,
or see the work of his hands!

What is at issue here is not the quantity of wine and beer being consumed but the priorities of the drinkers: as long as they have everything which makes their carousing pleasant, music played while they drink, and wine, they no longer ask what Yahweh has to say about their activities.[773] Note here that drinking, or the focus on drink, causes an impairment to vision and perception, as mentioned in the text from Prov 23:29-35. The scribe of Isaiah states that the elites do not 'see' the work of Yahweh's hands; in other words, they have descended into chaos; they are at a distance from the ordered creation of Yahweh. Justice cannot be served in this drunken state. A later verse from this same chapter further compounds the elites' misconduct:

Ah, you who are mighty ones in drinking wine
and valiant at mixing beer,
who acquit the guilty for a bribe,
and deprive the innocent of their rights! (Isa 5:22)

Stiebert observes that while traditionally honour would be indexed by wealth, in First Isaiah that cultural preference is subverted and instead wealth becomes 'condemned'.[774] Specifically in these passages, it is wealth as correlated by the consumption of alcohol that is targeted. A sarcastic tone is taken by the author of Isaiah here, sardonically remarking that the drinkers' masculinity is being bolstered in their ability to consume beer and wine. Hilary Lipka comments: 'In Isa 5:22, there is an ironic use of גבור, in that men who distinguish themselves in drinking are termed "mighty (גבורים) at drinking wine..."'[775] The act of drinking in conspicuously large quantities is similarly gendered in other ancient texts, including the *Iliad* 9 and the Ugaritic text *KTU* 1.3 I 2-27. In the latter, Baal uses

[773] Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12,* trans. R. A. Wilson (Chatham: W & J Mackay, 1972), 67.
[774] Johanna Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution* (London: Continuum, 2002), 95.
[775] Hilary Lipka, 'Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks: Shame and the Undermining of Masculine Performance in Biblical Texts' in I. Zsolnay ed. *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity* (London: Routledge, 2017), 187-8 n.18.

a large goblet described thus: 'A large imposing vessel, a rhyton for mighty men; a holy cup women may not see… A thousand jars he drew of the wine, a myriad he mixed in his mixture.'[776] Similarly, in *Iliad* 9 Achilles commands Patroklos: 'set up a mixing-bowl that is bigger, and mix us stronger drink, and make ready a cup for each man…'[777] Mark S. Smith goes as far to say that drinking large quantities of alcohol is a 'standard trope for warrior culture',[778] which appears to be the trope the scribe of Isaiah is mocking in 5:22. For him, masculinity is evidenced in executing justice and protecting the weak, not in out-drinking one another. [779] The scribe appears to mock the drinkers for their alcohol infused self-aggrandisement, and additionally may be emasculating them because of the predominant association between beer and women.

A similar sentiment is evident in Ecclesiastes with regards to the state of the land and the drinking habits of its rulers:

> Alas for you, O land, when your king is a servant,
> and your princes feast in the morning!
> Happy are you, O land, when your king is a nobleman,
> and your princes feast at the proper time—
> for strength, and not for drunkenness! (Eccl 10:16-17)

Drinking seems to be detrimental because of the range of harm it can inflict on those external to the drinking activities themselves. This goes beyond the list of physical maladies described in Prov 23:29-35. Instead, the concern in these texts is the impact of drinking on the rulers' ability to do their job and the impact that this has on the land and its vulnerable inhabitants. The justice of rulers is a

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[776] Lines 12-17 of *KTU* 1.3 translated by M. S. Smith in *Poetic Heroes: Literary Commemorations of Warriors and Warrior Culture in the Early Biblical World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014),a 176.
[777] Homer, *The Iliad*, lines 202-4 trans. by M. S. Smith in *Poetic Heroes,* 178.
[778] Mark S. Smith, *Poetic Heroes,* 178. Nicolas Wyatt also regards large appetites for alcohol as a facet of the depiction of heroic characters, *Religious texts from Ugarit,* 2nd ed. (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 405.
[779] In the book of Amos the prophet threatens the elites with the removal of their wine, which is just one aspect of the approaching chaos and destruction Yahweh has planned, due to their failure to be just to the poor: '…you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine. For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great are your sins— you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and push aside the needy in the gate… Hate evil and love goodness, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that Yahweh, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph' (Amos 5:11b-15).

reflection of the justice of God. Being a king and ruling justly is still a God-given function, a divinely ordained role of mediation, as is being a priest or prophet. Drunkenness therefore distorts the divine duties of the king. Prov 20:1 picks up on alcohol's ability to reduce wisdom: 'Wine is a scoffer, beer is clamorous, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.' The personification of wine as a scoffer may refer to those who deride wisdom and the understanding of Yahweh, for example in Isa 28:22. The word here for 'clamorous' is המה, the same used of the strange or foolish woman in Prov 7:11: 'She is loud (המיה) and wayward; her feet do not stay at home', and 9:13: 'The foolish woman is loud (המיה); she is ignorant and knows nothing.' This woman is characterised as a whore; she does not stay in one home but frequents the homes of other men. She may be tempting and enticing with her smooth words and her offers of food and drink (7:10-21; 9:14-17), but ultimately she will lead her followers to death, to Sheol (7:27; 9:18). Beer may be clamourous by making those who drink it loud and boisterous but their words, regardless of their volume, are empty and meaningless, even moronic: 'drink destroys whatever gumption a man may possess and under its influence he acts like an imbecile'.[780] Both wine and beer are characterised as disruptive to the wise and righteous way in Proverbs which is likely related to the propensity of drunk rulers to fail in their task of caring for their people.[781]

It is not just kings who are admonished for drinking too much. Other cultic elites, such as priests and prophets, are also the target of the scribe's condemnation in Isaiah, perhaps even more so than the other authorities:

> These also reel with wine
> and stagger with beer;
> the priest and the prophet reel with beer,
> they are confused with wine,
> they stagger with beer;
> they err in vision,

[780] William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* (London: SCM Press, 1970), 541.
[781] See also Prov 21:17: 'Whoever loves pleasure will suffer want; whoever loves wine and oil will not be rich.' While this verse likely refers less directly to drunkenness and more directly to the cost of expensive, high status items like wine and olive oil which make it unobtainable for many, it also hints at a lack of wisdom. See Clifford, *Proverbs*, 192.

they stumble in giving judgment.
All tables are covered with excrement and vomit (קיא צאה);[782]
no place is without it.[783] (Isa 28:7-8)

This text is one of the most striking and graphic portrayals of drunkenness in the Hebrew Bible. Even at the time it was likely shocking to an ancient audience that the priests and prophets, those meant to be upstanding and holy, would get so excessively drunk that their cult tables, or altars, are painted with vomit and perhaps excrement:

> Isaiah's description of the drunken stupor of these priests, prophets and royal advisors amid the vomit and excrement resulting from their uncontrollable binge drinking suggests that their advice and counsel are worthless. What reasonable king would listen to the advice of disgusting drunken fools wallowing in their own vomit and excrement?[784]

Joseph Blenkinsopp similarly notes that the drunken condition of the priests and prophets left them unable to carry out their required roles of religious instruction and intercession between the deity and the people.[785] The emphasis on instability (reeling, staggering and stumbling), is particularly problematic given the assumed need for stability and uprightness in a figure of religious authority. The same was required for cult statues of divinities in ancient southwest Asia; several prophetic texts mock Babylonian deities who were unstable and unreliable lest humans fastened them down to prevent their toppling over. For example, Isa 40:20 states: 'As a gift one chooses mulberry wood - wood that will not rot - then seeks out a skilled artisan to make firm an idol that will not topple' (cf. Isa 41:7; Jer 10:4). An unstable cult statue is not performing its required role as a potent figure of divinity, it must be upright and steady, which

[782] Or 'filthy vomit' as there is no conjunctive but צאה does refer specifically to human dung in Isa 36:12 and 2 Kgs 18:27.
[783] Some translations insert 'clean' here but this is too loaded with notions of ritual cleanliness to warrant its insertion in the English when it is not in the Hebrew text.
[784] Jimmy J. M. Roberts, *First Isaiah: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 350.
[785] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 388-9.

signals both efficacy and authority. The priests and prophets who reel and stumble are unstable, undignified and unauthoritative. Religious bodies must be whole, steadfast, and clean. That the tables are covered with vomit and filth is diametrically opposed to the priests' role as those who maintain a separation between that which is and is not 'clean'.[786] Although vomit and excrement are not cast as ritually unclean in the Hebrew Bible, there is a sense in which this spectacle renders the priests unable to see what is clean and unclean. Leviticus 10:9-10 may hint at the same idea:

> Drink no wine or beer, neither you [Aaron] nor your sons, when you enter the tent of meeting, that you may not die; it is a statute forever throughout your generations. You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean.

Alcohol is singled out here as a prohibitor of one of the priests' central roles. In Ezek 4:13 Yahweh commands the prophet Ezekiel to eat food cooked on human excrement to demonstrate that the people, as punishment, will eat their food in alien lands which will make it unclean. So, while defecating or coming into contact with human excrement did not generate ritual uncleanness, it seems that food associated with human waste became unclean. As the text in Isaiah states that the tables are covered with excrement, this would be problematic if the tables are sites of food consumption or food preparation such as animal sacrifice. The priests may have remained ritually clean despite their drunken vomiting, but they are socially perceived to be incapable of delivering justice and maintaining ritual order.

An interesting passage from Micah also comments on the use of alcohol by those claiming to be prophets:

> If someone were to go about uttering empty falsehoods (שׁקר),
> saying, 'I will prophesy (אטף) to you of wine and beer (שׁכר),'
> such a one would be the prophet (מטיף) for this people. (Mic 2:11)

[786] On the dyad of Clean/Unclean see chapter 2 of Olyan, *Rites and Rank*, 38-62.

Although this passage does not specifically describe a prophet drinking beer there appears to be some interesting wordplay here. First, the word for prophet is not the standard נביא, ראה or חזה, but instead comes from the root 'to drip' which is often used in contexts to describe not only the speaking of prophecy (Ezek 20:46, Ezek 21:2, Amos 7:16, Mic 2:6) but also the dripping of precious liquids such as honey, myrrh and wine:

> In that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine (Joel 3:18).
>
> Your lips drop honeycomb, my bride (Song 4:11).
>
> I arose to open to my beloved,
> and my hands dripped with myrrh (Song 5:5a).

In Mic 2:11 there also seems to be a pun on the word שׁכר, beer, with the term for lies or falsehood, שׁקר. These Hebrew words sound very similar and seem to be being used sarcastically by the scribe of Micah in order to equate false prophecy with beer. It creates an image of the words of the false prophet dripping out of his mouth like alcohol. Like in Isaiah, alcohol is depicted here as detrimental to performing the prophetic role. Nevertheless, beer appears to have played a role in the activities of ritual specialists, demonstrating that it was not just wine that had religious potency.

As these texts demonstrate, drunkenness is deeply problematic if those with high-status social and cultic responsibilities drink in an inappropriate context. Ritual specialists or other ruling, judicial, authorities are upbraided if they drink at the wrong time of day or so regularly that over time they forget what has been decreed for the rest of the population. These biblical extracts should not be taken as evidence that the Hebrew Bible as a whole condemns drinking alcohol. Instead it is the very specific context of elites with responsibilities who are reprimanded for their unfitting behaviour. Indeed, drunkenness, as I will demonstrate, had wider connotations which were depicted much more positively than in these elite examples.

5.2 Drunkenness and the Erotic

The close association of sex and alcohol in ancient cultures is well known - from the cults of Bacchus and Dionysus in Greco-Roman contexts, to the role of Hathor in ancient Egyptian religion.[787] This phenomenon is also evident in many biblical texts, and most explicitly in the Song of Songs:

> I would lead you and bring you
> into the house of my mother,
> who would instruct me:[788]
> I would give you spiced wine to drink,
> the juice of my pomegranates.
> O that his left hand was under my head,
> and that his right hand embraced me!
> I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
> do not stir up or awaken love
> until it is ready! (Song 8:2-4)

In many biblical texts, alcohol frequently appears to be associated with sex. For example, in the passage quoted above, the woman speaking imagines providing her lover with wine, under the advice of her mother, in order to initiate intercourse. That her mother has passed on this technique of seduction may

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[787] In a hymn found at Medamud the Eye of Re, who is often personified as the goddesses Hathor or Sekhmet, is invited to join a ritual:

> Come, oh Golden One, who eats of praise,
> because the food of her desire is dancing…
> 'Come! The procession is in the place of inebriation,
> that hall of travelling through the marshes…
> The drunken celebrants drum for you during the cool of the night,
> with the result that those who awaken bless you.

See John C. Darnell, 'Hathor Returns to Medamud', *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 22 (1995), 49-54. It is thought that the expression 'travelling through the marshes' is a euphemism for having sex so there again appears to be a link between drunkenness and sexual activity here, see Peter Lacovara, *The World of Ancient Egypt: A Daily Life Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 1 (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2017), 224. The goddess Hathor was a goddess of both love and drunkenness which may indicate their connections to one another. Carolyn Graves-Brown states that 'one may postulate that such intoxication also included erotic euphoria', see Carolyna Graves-Brown, *Dancing for Hathor: Women in Ancient Egypt* (London: Continuum, 2010), 168-9.

[788] Reading with MT against LXX and Syriac 'who conceived me'.

suggest that there was a well-known connection between intoxication and arousal; a piece of inherited wisdom from preceding female generations. Indeed, Naomi passes on this intergenerational advice with her instruction to Ruth not to make herself known sexually to Boaz until after he has finished eating and drinking at a feast (Ruth 3:3). The woman in Song of Songs gives her lover the juice of her pomegranates to drink. Pomegranates are used regularly throughout the song to describe the woman's body (4:3, 13; 6:7). The juice therefore appears to be exuding from her own body as an expression of her own sexuality and agency. This metaphor of the woman's body as a sweet, consumable banquet of intoxicating fruits is repeated throughout the song and is highly suggestive of the sexual sensations involved in lovemaking.

In the Song, vineyards are the location of sexual exploration: 'let us go out early to the vineyards, and see whether the vines have budded, whether the grape blossoms have opened and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love' (Song 7:12, see also 2:15). Vines are common symbols of fertility, fruitfulness, abundant agriculture and vitality, whilst blossoming flowers allude to female sexual maturity. Grapes and wine are used as metaphors for the sexualised body: 'O may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, and the scent of your breath like apples, and your kisses like the best wine flowing smoothly to lovers, gliding over my lips and teeth' (Song 7:8-9). Carey Ellen Walsh comments that the vintage harvest would have been an apt context for such euphemistic and sensory imagery:

> For when ripe, the darkened grapes hang heavily on the vine, engorged with juice, and in triangular clusters. Women would be harvesting those fruits, cementing an association in the imagination and want of onlookers.[789]

In the Song the lover speaks of the woman's body as something to be consumed; her very being intoxicates like wine.[790] As Fiona Black states: 'Wine

[789] Carey Ellen Walsh, *Exquisite Desire: Religion, the Erotic and the Song of Songs* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 130.
[790] Cf. 5:1 'I come to my garden, my sister, my bride, I pluck my myrrh with my spice, I eat my honeycomb with my honey, I drink my wine with my milk.' The male lover eats up the woman's

brings together mouth, teeth, vagina, and breasts, suggesting that they collapse into each other on the body's erotic sites. Written in the description, we see, then, the lover's erotic-cannibalistic feast as he drinks, tastes and eats'.[791] Being overcome by the sensations of the erotic is comparable to being overcome with the sensations of inebriation, as the male lover in the Song suggests: 'Eat, friends, drink and be drunk on love (דודים)!' (Songs 5:1). דודים could be translated as 'caresses', as in 1:2, and this translation would thus allude to sexual activity itself .[792] Cheryl Exum comments: 'Surely it is the effect of love that is paramount here, which, like wine, is intoxicating, producing a sense of euphoria or giddiness'.[793] The notion of 'drinking love' is also present in Proverbs: 'Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning; let us delight ourselves with love' (Prov 7:18). The opening lines of the Song link wine to sexual activity: 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for your caresses are better than wine' (Song. 1:2). Intoxication, taste and tactility are encapsulated in the lover's description of her anticipation of sexual experience. In the next verse (v.3) the perfume or aroma of the man is also evoked as an intoxicating aspect of the experience of intimacy and may connote the bouquet of wine.[794]

The close association of sex and alcohol is also evident in iconographic images and poetic texts across ancient southwest Asia. Many images depicting erotic scenes also depict beer drinking. Most famous are the Mesopotamian terracottas depicting a (usually heterosexual) couple having sex: the man penetrates the woman from behind whilst she drinks from a beer jar through a straw.[795] In a much needed treatment of erotic iconographic scenes from

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delicious, fragrant and intoxicating body so he is both 'satiated and besotted'. Cheryl J. Exum, *Song of Songs: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 181.

[791] Fiona Black, *The Artifice of Love: Grotesque Bodies and the Song of Songs* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 153.

[792] See Exum, *Song of Songs*, 93, 155.

[793] Exum, *Song of Songs,* 94.

[794] Exum, *Song of Songs*, 94.

[795] Julia Assante, *The Erotic Reliefs of Ancient Mesopotamia*, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (Columbia: Colombia University, 2000). For 13 images of this scene see plates I-IV, 340-343. See also plate XXVI figures 16 and 17, the latter being the only example of the woman drinking beer whilst squatting over an ithyphallic male, 365. Assante comments: 'An interesting twist on the beer drinking motif comes from an Arabian Gulf stamp seal that dates to the early second millennium (pi. XXVI. fig. 17). It combines the drinking theme with a spread-legged female who is literally splayed on a supine male's arm-length penis. The vessel she drinks from seems to float in mid-air. Although this stamp seal may have been influenced by terracotta plaques, the

Mesopotamia, Julia Assante offers a refreshing perspective on the magical function of these clay plaques.[796] She terms the scenes involving beer consumption the '*coitus a tergo* beer-drinking' scene, and demonstrates it was one of the earliest erotic motifs in Mesopotamia, first appearing in the Ur III period.[797] On these images Stefania Mazonni has commented: 'Because alcohol is, within limits, conducive to sexual intercourse, women and alcohol were associated in visual art... [the woman's] provocative posture and the symbols in the field allude to fertility, as in the many later erotic scenes'.[798]

However, Assante sees much richer and broader associations between and surrounding beer and sex. In erotic literature from ancient southwest Asia in the third and early second millennia BCE there are frequent occurrences of alcohol, particularly beer, being used in erotic scenarios. In a Sumerian clay tablet, *BM* 23631, a god named Utu who is apparently an expert in beer making seeks to seduce his sister, the goddess Inanna, by serving her his beer. Inanna pleads with Utu saying she would 'ride' with him to the Cedar Mountain but that she does not know anything of the womanly ways of kissing or copulation.[799] Beer therefore turns this apparently virginal girl/deity into the sexually assured goddess she is known to be in other Sumerian texts. That beer had the ability to captivate a desired lover points to its use as an aphrodisiac, as Assante concurs: 'it is obvious that beer itself was consumed as an aphrodisiac, for in Sumerian literature drinking it was frequently a prelude to sex.'[800] In the same way, Ruth (Ruth 3:3) and the woman in Song 8:2 use alcoholic drinks to intoxicate and seduce. Alcohol is both a social and sexual agent, it has a socio-sexual impact on its consumers.

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loss of the *a tergo* position, which was *de rigeur* in plaques, signifies a substantial shift in the way images that combine coitus and drinking were understood.' 213-4.

[796] Assante, *The Erotic Reliefs*.

[797] Assante, *The Erotic Reliefs,* 175.

[798] Stefania Mazzoni in response to Alexander H. Joffe, 'Alcohol and Social Complexity in Ancient Western Asia', *Current Anthropology* 39 (1998), 313 (see appended comments).

[799] Samuela N. Kramer, *From the Poetry of Sumer: Creation, Glorification, Adoration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 94; Samuel N. Kramer, 'BM 23631: Bread for Enlil, Sex for Inanna', *Orientalia* 54 (1985), 118; Gwendoline Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature* (London: Routledge, 1994), 84.

[800] Assante, *The Erotic Reliefs*, 239.

It is not just that alcohol was used to seduce in this poetry; the sexual body is itself described in terms of alcoholic beverages. Intoxication from drinking, and intoxication by a lover's body, were poetically enmeshed. In a Sumerian courtly love song of King Šusin, *SRT* 23, his beloved's vulva is described as tasting sweet like beer. Lines 19-21 read: 'My . . . barmaiden, her beer is sweet. Like her beer her vulva is sweet, her beer is sweet, Like her mouth her vulva is sweet, her beer is sweet'.[801] This engages the notion that the sexual corporeal consumption of a lover's body is like the consumption of sweet beer. In Song 7:2 the male lover says 'your navel is a rounded bowl – may it not lack spiced wine.' This reference to the navel has been regarded as a euphemism for the vulva or vagina by many commentators.[802] This statement then, as in the Sumerian song, aligns sexual secretions with other fragrant and intoxicating fluids. Combined with the Song's repeated imagery of the male consuming the female's body, this allusion creates further ties between alcohol and the erotic. The male drinks the secretions of the woman's body, likening the experience to drinking fragrant wine or sweet beer, and becomes equally intoxicated by both.

Assante points out that Old Babylonian viewers of plaque erotica would have recognised not only the shared properties of sexual arousal and beer, such as sweetness and wetness, but also the visual puns.[803] The simultaneous copulation and drinking through a straw may serve as a *double entendre* for fellatio, especially in a broken plaque from Kish, which depicts the woman holding a disproportionately large straw in one hand, from which she sucks up beer, and her sexual partner's disproportionately large phallus in the other, behind her.[804] Assante states:

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[801] Bendt Alster, 'Sumerian Love Songs', *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 79 (1985), 141-2.

[802] Christopher Meredith, ''Eating Sex' and the Unlovely Song of Songs: Reading Consumption, Excretion and DH Lawrence'", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 42 (2018), 348. For discussion see Black, *The Artifice of Love,* 151-3; Exum, *Song of Songs,* 233.

[803] Assante, *The Erotic Reliefs,* 242.

[804] See Assante, *The Erotic Reliefs,* plaque II no. 25; Julia Assante 'Sex, Magic and the Liminal and the Liminal Body in Erotic Art and Texts of the Old Babylonian Period' in S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting, *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East Proceedings of the 47th Rencontre Assyriolgique Internationale, Helsinki, July 2-6, 2001* (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus, 2002), 35.

> …one might interpret the male in *coitus a tergo* beer drinking scenes as somehow tasting the beer of the woman's vagina (or anus) through his probing penis. The erect penis is, in effect, the male's drinking tube, plunged into the beery orifice of the woman's body, and, like the drinking tube, transmitting fluids itself. Equally, the woman's body is at once the vessel-source of fluids but also the recipient. The two-way interchange embedded in plaque imagery becomes visible against this cultural background.[805]

This interpretation of the image echoes the references in Song of Songs and the love song of King Šusin in which the male lover describes the taste of the woman's fluids as that of beer or wine. These puns emphasise the notion at play in all these erotic texts and images, which is the equation of drinking with the act of intercourse; both are internal, bodily sensations which are comparably pleasant and intoxicating:

> It is fairly evident that wine and sexual pleasure are linked by their sweetness and by their shared intoxicating properties. The metaphors of wine and love share a dual degree of correspondence in their taste and their effect.[806]

It is more than just a metaphor. Rather, there is a real comparison being made between the acts of sex and drinking, the bodily encounters are equally wet, sweet and sensuous. Drinking and fellatio is alluded to also in Song 2:3-4:

> As an apple tree among the trees of the wood,
> so is my beloved among young men.
> With great delight I sat in his shadow,
> and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
> He brought me to the house of wine,
> and his intention toward me was love.

[805] Assante, *The Erotic Reliefs,* 240.
[806] Walsh, *Exquisite Desire*, 118.

The male lover is described as a tree, bearing sweet fruit. This imagery is euphemistic for the erection of the male lover's penis and the sexual enjoyment the woman receives from giving him climactic, oral sexual stimulation.[807] The location of their sexual activity is a 'house of wine' not unlike the tavern of the Mesopotamian 'Tavern Sketch', a love song which also uses the taste of alcohol in an erotic context. The male first states: 'O my sister, the beer of your grain is delicious… The *gumeze* beer of your wort is delicious, come, my beloved sister, in your house, your passion…, [come] my beloved sister'.[808] The female later responds: 'May you put your right hand in my vulva, with your left stretched towards my head'.[809] This response is comparative to the female lover's desire in Song of Songs: 'O that his left hand was under my head, and that his right hand embraced me!' (2:6). It is evident that alcohol was not out of place in sexual scenes as depicted in both art and poetry from Sumer in particular. What is notable about these examples is that the scenes are extremely positive in the sense that sex, and specifically women's sexual pleasure, are expressed with delight in a simultaneously innocent and erotic tone. This positive tenor is not the case for all biblical examples in which alcohol is used as a sexual lubricant, as I will now discuss.

In multiple biblical texts the portrayal of alcohol as a socio-sexual lubricant is associated with the initiation of sexual behaviour in others. It is used in order to coerce, not primarily because it renders the drinker incapacitated (though that certainly is another effect of alcohol), but because it increases sexual desire and potency. In Jdt 12:11-12 the King Holofernes says to his eunuch Bagoas:

> Go and persuade the Hebrew woman who is in your care to join us and to eat and drink with us. For it would be a disgrace if we let such a woman go without having intercourse with her. If we do not seduce her, she will laugh at us.

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[807] In relation to this Ken Stone remarks: 'The person who receives oral sexual stimulation no doubt finds this a pleasurable experience, but when the oral stimulation of a partner is compared to the experience of eating sweet, succulent fruit, it is difficult to insist that pleasure is going only in one direction.' *Practicing Safer Texts: Food, Sex and Bible in Queer Perspective* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 101.
[808] Leick, *Sex and Eroticism,* 127.
[809] Leick, *Sex and Eroticism,* 127.

The presumption in this deuterocanonical text is that the drinking involved at the Holofernes' banquet is required in order for the seduction of Judith to be successful. He could not just seduce her outside of this drunken context. The aphrodisiacal associations of alcohol are further emphasised by the large quantities of wine Holofernes then consumes in verse 20 after he has watched Judith also consume the presented wine. In 2 Sam 11:8, David commands Uriah the Hittite, who has been summoned back from battle, to go to his house and 'bathe his feet', or in other words 'get his penis wet'. Uriah ignores this command out of faithfulness to his fellow soldiers. As this direct command fails, David instead uses alcohol to instigate sexual relations between Uriah and Bathsheba in order to hide her adulterous pregnancy: 'David invited him to eat and drink in his presence and made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house' (2 Sam 11:13). King David gets Uriah drunk because he believes that this will weaken Uriah's resolve to stay committed to his service to the King and his fellow soldiers because his desire for sex with Bathsheba would be intensified by the wine. There is, again, evidently an underlying notion at work in the text that alcohol facilitates the desire to copulate. This notion has also been noted by Ken Stone in relation to this passage and those of Noah and Lot, to which we will now turn.[810]

Two of the best-known biblical stories concerning drunkenness and sex occur in Genesis: Noah gets drunk after the flood (Gen 9:20-24) and Lot is made drunk by his daughters after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:31-36). On the one hand, alcohol, and especially wine, is seen to encourage and promote sexual activity and passion. On the other, excessive amounts of alcohol can lead to the incapacitation of the individual, leaving them unaware of the action around them. Hence, Lot is able to lie with and impregnate his daughters but is (apparently) unaware when it is happening:

> And the firstborn said to the younger, 'Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the world. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie

[810] Stone, *Practicing Safer Texts*, 52, 74.

> with him, so that we our father's seed may live.' So they made their father drink wine that night; and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. On the next day, the firstborn said to the younger, 'Look, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, so our father's seed may live.' So they made their father drink wine that night also; and the younger rose, and lay with him; and he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father (Gen 19:31-36).

Much has been written concerning this text, particularly regarding how the daughters and Lot should be judged in the absence of any clear condemnation by the text itself. Some scholars have regarded the daughters as praiseworthy heroes,[811] while others have seen them as tricksters, who cunningly procure offspring in order to save humankind.[812] By contrast, some regard their actions as 'shockingly transgressive',[813] and others have suggested that the text suppresses a scenario in which Lot actively sought abusive intercourse with his daughters due to repressed desires.[814] Regardless, it is clear that alcohol is again the tool which allows for this sexual act to occur. While most commentators have stated that the alcohol incapacitates Lot which allows for him to remain unaware, and thus not culpable, of the incestuous sex acts,[815] I would suggest that it plays an additional role. As a substance presented as increasing proclivity towards sex - a socio-sexual agent - it may also have been utilised in this story to ensure that Lot would be receptive to his daughters' sexual actions. Therefore, the alcohol in this story from Genesis has a dual role: first, it ensures that Lot was sufficiently drunk to have sexual intercourse because of the arousing or aphrodisiacal qualities of wine; second, the alcohol

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[811] See examples listed in Johanna Stiebert, *First-Degree Incest and The Hebrew Bible: Sex in the Family* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 159.
[812] Melissa Jackson, 'Lot's Daughters and Tamar as Tricksters and the Patriarchal Narratives as Feminist Theology', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 98 (2002), 29-46.
[813] Esther Fuchs, *Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academics Press, 2003), 68.
[814] See examples listed in Stiebert, *First-Degree Incest*, 162-4.
[815] For example, John E. Hartley, *Genesis* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000), 190; John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 313.

causes him to be unaware and therefore blameless in the procreative acts with his daughters.[816] Stiebert comments that 'the father is carefully exonerated by being rendered incapable of assent.'[817] Indeed, the wine is a literary, and ethical, distancing device which also assures that the sexual advances are reciprocated.

In Gen 9:7 God commands Noah to repopulate the earth: 'And you, be fruitful and multiply, abound on the earth and multiply in it.' Noah goes to his wife's tent (אהלה)[818] to repopulate the earth, but he is unaware until awakening that Ham has acted inappropriately:

> The sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth was peopled. Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard. He drank some of the wine and became drunk, and he lay uncovered in her tent (אהלה). And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, 'Cursed be Canaan; lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers.' (Gen 9:18-25)

It is not necessarily the case that Noah's becoming drunk is condemned in the text. Indeed, Gen 5:29 appears to perceive Noah's viticulture as entirely positive: 'he named him Noah (נח), saying, "Out of the ground that Yahweh has cursed this one shall bring us comfort (ינחמנו) from our work and from the toil of

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[816] Note a slightly different circumstance possibly involving drunken sex in Amos 2:7-8: 'father and son go in to the same girl, so that my holy name is profaned; they lay themselves down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge; and in the house of their God they drink wine bought with fines they imposed.' It is not clear if the sex occurs prior to the wine being consumed or if these are two separate accusations.

[817] Stiebert, *First-Degree Incest,* 197.

[818] Note the feminine possessive ending and discussion below.

our hands."' Noah's restoration of the 'cursed' land after the flood may also be understood as simply following God's command to repopulate the earth; in order to do so the scribes render Noah the first to make wine, thus providing him with the socio-sexual agent required to do so. After all, Lot's daughters also use wine in an attempt to repopulate the earth in the belief that they are the only living beings left alive. Walter Brueggemann states in relation to Noah's drunkenness: 'Verse 21 cannot be interpreted as a negative comment on drinking alcohol, or drunkenness. Indeed the Old Testament is not preoccupied with such a "moral" issue…The drunkenness of Noah is only presented as a context for what follows.'[819]

The noun for 'tent' in v. 21 uses the feminine possessive suffix rendering it 'her tent', which points to a number of possible interpretations. The tent may belong to the fertile, female earth, perhaps in the form of a goddess, which in a mythological setting dovetails with Noah being a 'man of the soil' who 'reseeds' (or impregnates) the earth which was decimated by the flood.[820] It is also possible to read this passage in the light of other texts which utilise the expression 'the nakedness of his father' (v.22). In Lev 18:14, 16; 20:11, 30, 21 and Deut 22:30 and 27:20 having sex with another man's wife is described as uncovering that man's nakedness. In our text then, this phrase has been demonstrated as referring to the nakedness of Ham's mother and therefore Ham's crime was that he committed maternal incest.[821] This reading would point to the idea that Noah went to his wife's tent, drunk, in order to obey God's command to procreate.[822] If accurate, then what the text condemns through Noah's cursing of Canaan is not Noah's inebriation but Ham's fathering of a son, Canaan, through incestuous intercourse with his mother. The text awkwardly repeats that Ham is the father of Canaan in verses 18 and 22 because this is precisely the story about *how* Ham fathered Canaan. This then accounts for the anti-Hamite and anti-Canaanite rhetoric which introduces prohibitions of incest in Leviticus 18 and may also be present in Deut 22:30 and

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[819] Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982) 89.
[820] On Earth as a goddess in ancient southwest Asian contexts see Manfred Hutter, 'Earth' in Karel Van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter Willem Van Der Horst (eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden: Eerdmans, 1999), 273-3.
[821] John S. Bergsma and Scott W. Hahn, 'Noah's Nakedness and the Curse on Canaan (Genesis 9:20-27)', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124 (2005), 34-40.
[822] Bergsma and Hahn, 'Noah's Nakedness', 38, see n. 55.

27:20.[823] Similarly to Lot, Noah's drunken state means he does not know what Ham does to his wife and so again we find wine having the role of enabling another to take advantage of the drunkard's unconscious state.

In these particular passages, which demonstrate alcohol's quality as an enhancer of sexual passion and sexual potency, excessive consumption is not condemned on the part of the consumer, but on the part of those who take advantage of those who are drunk. These texts display an awareness that alcohol has known abilities to encourage sexual behaviours, but it does not condemn drunkenness if it is voluntary. The passages from Song of Songs appear instead to praise and appreciate the erotic, sensual quality of wine. It is only when wine is used to manipulate another to become sexually active (as with David and Uriah, and Lot and his daughters), or one's drunken state is taken advantage of by another (as with Ham and Noah), that there are negative consequences. Excessive consumption of alcohol in an erotic context is not seen to be deviant or even shameful in these Hebrew Bible texts, as is also the case in other texts from ancient southwest Asia.

5.3 Drunkenness as Blessing from Yahweh

> But the vine said to them,
> 'Shall I stop producing my wine
> that cheers (המשׂמח) gods and mortals,
> and go to sway over the trees?'
> (Judg 9:13)

One of the most prevalent associations of drunkenness in the Hebrew Bible is the joyful or merry mood experienced by the drinker. In the above extract, even the personified vine knows the elation that wine can induce in both humans and deities. Several narratives mention merriment in relation to drunkenness. For example, when Nabal holds a large feast in 1 Sam 25:36-7, we are told 'the heart of Nabal was merry (לב נבל טוב) within him for he was very drunk' (v.36). In other cases, the text does not need to mention drunkenness in particular but

[823] Bergsma and Hahn, 'Noah's Nakedness', 36.

only notes that the drinkers' or banqueters' hearts have become merry: 'Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon, and to rejoice… And when their hearts were merry (טוב לבם) they said, "Call Samson, and let him entertain us"' (Judg 16:23-25).[824] It appears that this metaphor for drunkenness was so well known that it was used to refer to alternative causes of joyfulness: 'Then the people of Ephraim shall become like warriors, and their hearts shall be glad (שׂמח) like with wine' (Zech 10:7). In fact, drunkenness has become so synonymous with merriment that some English translations translate שׁכר ('drunk'), as 'merry': 'Portions were taken to them from Joseph's table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry (וישׁכרו) with him' (Gen 43:34 NRSV). Alcohol's ability to make somebody happy is apparently the underlying notion in Prov 31:6-7: 'Give beer to one who is perishing, and wine to those with a bitter heart; let them drink and forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more.' The association between joy and drunkenness appears to be entirely positive (except in one instance which will be discussed below) and even seen as a form of blessing which is both provided and approved of by God.

The *jouissance* of drunkenness is most starkly prominent when prophetic texts discuss the loss or retraction of wine and beer:

> Joy and gladness are taken away
> from the fruitful field;
> and in the vineyards no songs are sung,[825]
> no shouts are raised;
> no treader treads out wine in the presses;
> the vintage-shout is hushed. (Isa 16:10 cf. Jer 48:33)

These words are spoken by Yahweh about Moab (16:13), a region that earlier in the chapter is said to have been renowned for its wine trade (vv. 8-9). The reason for the halt to wine making is not given but it may have been due to an

[824] See also Judg 9:27; 19:6,9,22; Ruth 3:7; 2 Sam 13:28; 1 King 4:20; Esth 1:10; Eccl 8:15; 9:7; 10:19.
[825] Note Ps 69:12 in which beer-drinkers are also depicted as singers: 'I am the subject of gossip for those who sit in the gate, and the beer drinkers make songs about me.'

impending attack, drought, or crop failure.[826] The wine harvest was traditionally accompanied with singing and shouting in celebration of the successful crop and future festivities that having wine would facilitate. The magnitude of this punishment as depicted in Isa 16:10; 24:7-11 and Jer 48:33 is conveyed in this elaboration as Brueggemann highlights:

> The wine-making will stop and with it all glad occasions of profit, blessing, and imbibing. The poet anticipates an abrupt end to all joy and celebration so characteristic of the community. The regular patterns of social life which generate celebration, well-being, and identity are all halted; in their place come grief and mourning.[827]

What is highlighted here is the social importance and impact of getting drunk in a communal gathering. While the loss of drunkenness means a loss of joy, it also marks the loss of convivial community gatherings which would solidify inter-community bonds and strengthen shared identities.[828] These passages draw on the interrelation of agricultural life with social life. Food and fertility are necessary for the continuation of the social: 'The poem makes clear how much the taken-for-granted well-being of social life is dependent upon the ecological system of the food chain, a system that is fragile and completely dependent upon the sustenance of the creator.'[829] If the ecological system is dependent on the deity, then the joy received from drunkenness is also dependent on the deity. The breakdown of sociality is marked by the end of wine.

Brueggemann comments: 'The tradition of Isaiah knows about the unrestrained singing, dancing, shouting, and drinking that belong to a successful harvest (cf. 9:3; Ps 126:6). But now there is the ominous silence of failure, dismay, and death'.[830] Joyful music would also have accompanied the feasts themselves as

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[826] Roberts, *First Isaiah*, 237.
[827] Walter Brueggemann, *To Build, To Plant: A Commentary on Jeremiah 26-52* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 242-3.
[828] Carol Meyers, 'The Function of Feasts: An Anthropological Perspective on Israelite Religious Festivals' in S. Olyan ed. *Social Theory and the Study of Israelite Religion* (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 2012),159.
[829] Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998),192.
[830] Brueggemann, 144.

well as the harvesting activities, the lack of music mirrors the lack of alcohol in the following extract:

> The wine dries up,
> the vine languishes,
> all the merry-hearted sigh.
> The mirth of the timbrels is stilled,
> the noise of the jubilant has ceased,
> the mirth of the lyre is stilled.
> No longer do they drink wine with singing;
> beer is bitter to those who drink it.
> The city of chaos is broken down,
> every house is shut up so that no one can enter.
> There is complaining in the streets for lack of wine;
> all joy has reached its eventide;
> the gladness of the earth is banished (Isa 24:7-11).

Here, Yahweh depicts the impending doom he will send, not just to one nation, but to the whole earth (v.6). The lack of alcohol is depicted as if a cloud of depression and oppression has descended on the world. Beer too cannot help: 'beer has become bitter to those who drink it (v.9). The party is over, and what alcoholic drinks are left are incapable of reproducing the former mirth.'[831] Lack of alcohol epitomises lack of joy. Chaos rules in the wake of the absence of beer and wine as these are markers of social order and community. Joel 1:5 echoes the same sentiment: 'Wake up, you drunkards, and weep; and wail, all you wine-drinkers, over the grape juice, for it is cut off from your mouth.' The hopelessness and disorder that Yahweh will send to the world as punishment is presented as a lack of drunkenness.[832]

The book of Qohelet (Ecclesiastes) offers an extended assessment of the joy of drinking, though it is often also paired with eating. In 10:19 the scribe states: 'Feasts are made for laughter; wine gladdens life'. This verse echoes what is

[831] Roberts, *First Isaiah,* 314.
[832] See also Hag 1:6a: 'You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you are not engorged; you drink, but you do not become drunk'.

found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, while at the same time is possibly being cynical about the princes and kings in vv. 16-17, discussed above.[833] In Eccl 2:3 he states that he will begin a sort of experiment: 'I searched with my mind how to cheer (למשוך) my body with wine—my mind still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, until I might see what was good for mortals to do under heaven during the few days of their life' (NRSV).[834] Thomas Krüger translates the first phrase: 'I tried bathing my body with wine' in order to convey the 'drastic expression for excessive enjoyment' that in the Hebrew literally reads 'to draw my flesh through wine'.[835] Qohelet seems to decide that there is no worthwhile way to live life (Eccl 2:12-23): 'utter futility characterises the human endeavour to gain happiness by means of wisdom, pleasure or achievements.'[836] However, the scribe then concludes in v.24 saying 'There is nothing better for mortals than to eat and drink, and find enjoyment in their toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God.' Such a message is repeated a further four times throughout the book of Ecclesiastes in 3:13, 5:18, 8:15 and 9:7. This passage and the surrounding verses appear to echo the message of the tavern keeper Šiduri in the Epic of Gilgamesh:

> Gilgamesh, whither rovest thou?
> The life thou pursuest thou shalt not find.
> When the gods created mankind,
> Death for mankind they set aside,
> Life in their own hands retaining.
> Thou, Gilgamesh, let full be thy belly,
> Make thou merry by day and by night.
> of each day make thou a feast of rejoicing,
> Day and night dance thou and play!
> Let thy garments be sparkling fresh,
> Thy head be washed; bathe thou in water.

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[833] Choon L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 340.
[834] For a summary of the many differing suggestion that have been put forward on the translation of למשוך see Graham S. Ogden, *Qohelet,* 2nd Ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 44.
[835] Thomas Krüger, *Qohelet: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004), 56-7. For an alternative translation see Michael V. Fox, *The JPS Bible Commentary: Ecclesiastes* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 13.
[836] James Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1988), 78.

> Pay heed to the little one that holds on to thy hand,
> Let thy spouse delight in thy bosom!
> For this is the task of [mankind]![837]

Šiduri too sees earthly pleasures as the best way to live in light of the fact that humans will all eventually die. Ecclesiastes appears to be saying that as all mortals end up the same way; the best way to spend life is to enjoy the food and drink God provides: 'life is something that mortals cannot hold on to forever. Immortality is something that human beings cannot find; people cannot live forever. And so one must make the most of the present.'[838]

The final discussion of drunkenness in Ecclesiastes takes the message one step further: 'Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has long ago approved what you do' (Eccl 9:7). Drinking alcohol and the enjoyment or elation that is then experienced is actually approved of by God. As Michael Fox comments, 'God not only allows you enjoyment but also *wants* you to have it'.[839] Crenshaw corroborates this, saying: 'Since one's capacity to enjoy life depends on a divine gift, anyone who can eat and drink must enjoy divine favour…Divine approval precedes human enjoyment.'[840] What this effectively means is that the joy experienced in drunkenness, the sensation described as 'pulling flesh through wine' by Qohelet,[841] is derived from God's divine favour. God approves of drunkenness because it brings joy. Krüger takes this one step further in saying that 'if one relates 9:1 to the insecurity of human beings over God's "love" or "hate" towards them, here the way is shown to overcome it.'[842] Remarkably, this text seems to be suggesting that God displays his love through one's enjoyment and pleasure in eating and drinking, that is, in drunkenness. Deriving pleasure from inebriation is proof of God's love (אהבה).

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[837] 'The Epic of Gilgamesh', trans. Ephraim A. Speiser in James B. Pritchard ed. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* 3rd Ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 90.
[838] Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 306.
[839] Fox, *Ecclesiastes*, 63. Emphasis in original.
[840] Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes,* 162.
[841] Fox, *Ecclesiastes*, 13.
[842] Krüger, *Qohelet.* 171.

The idea that the inebriation is a gift or blessing from Yahweh is visible in other texts from the Hebrew Bible. Ps 104:14-15 lists the agricultural products that God produces and sustains for humans to have a satisfying life:

> You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
> and plants for people to use,
> to bring forth food from the earth,
> and wine to gladden the human heart,
> oil to make the face shine,
> and bread to strengthen the human heart.

The idea that God is one who brings forth wine specifically for the primary role of it gladdening the heart demonstrates the overall positive regard this scribe had towards drunkenness. As I have argued in previous chapters, it was likely believed that the transformation of grape juice into alcoholic wine was considered to be divine in some way. This Psalm also suggests that the fermented quality of wine which brings joy via drunkenness is also a God-given gift or blessing. A text from Isaiah reiterates the idea that grape juice itself is a blessing:

> Thus says Yahweh:
> As the wine is found in the cluster,
> and they say, 'Do not destroy it,
> for there is a blessing in it,'
> so I will do for my servants' sake,
> and not destroy them all. (Isa 65:8)

The idea that wine is a blessing found inside clusters of grapes is presented as a known saying or proverb in this text. Perhaps it refers to the idea that vine growers were reluctant to throw away or waste grapes because the juice contained inside was an inherently good and divine substance. Indeed, multiple texts correlate successful wine harvests and abundance of wine as rewards from God: 'May God give you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine' (Gen 27:28); 'Honour Yahweh with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be

filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine' (Prov 3:9-10). This theme also occurs in promises made for the future of the Israelites: 'he will love you, bless you, and multiply you; he will bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock, in the land that he swore to your ancestors to give you' (Deut 7:13); 'So you shall know that I, Yahweh your God, dwell in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall never again pass through it. In that day the mountains shall drip grape juice…' (Joel 3:17-18; c.f. Amos 9:13-14).

The counterpoint to these texts, in which the presence of wine is a blessing from God, are texts in which God's retraction of wine is explicitly stated: 'I have stopped the wine from the wine presses; no one treads them with vintage-shouts; the vintage-shouts are no more' (Jer 48:33). Similarly, a failed grape harvest is regarded as a divine curse or punishment: 'You shall plant vineyards and dress them, but you shall neither drink the wine nor gather the grapes, for the worm shall eat them' (Deut 28:39).[843] Tova Ganzel highlights the importance of dew in Yahweh's provision for the land and its wine production, its absence evocative of a strained social relationship or punishment between Israel and Yahweh:[844] 'Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine...' (Hag 1:10-11). Yahweh's withholding of dew, a vital water source for vines, is thus another way in which he could revoke the joy induced by wine consumption.

These texts and the discussion of eating and drinking for pleasure in Ecclesiastes demonstrate that drinking to feel elated, that is, being drunk, was not only regarded positively but also as a phenomenon provided by Yahweh because he desired it for humans. Indeed, in the 'new creation' after the flood, a vineyard is the first crop to be planted (Gen 9:20). Yahweh's ordered creation intentionally includes wine. It appears to be a received cultural idea that the

[843] See also Hag 1:6, 11; Hos 9:2; Mic 6:15 Zeph 1:13.
[844] Tova Ganzel, 'Unmixed Blessings' in Diana Lipton ed. *From Forbidden Fruit to Milk and Honey: A Commentary on Food in the Torah* (Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2018), 291.

merriment experienced from imbibing large quantities of alcohol was regarded as proof of God's favour, blessing, and possibly love.

Despite the common pairing of drunkenness and a merry heart in biblical texts, it would appear that the heart was also affected in another way by this intoxication. The heart was the seat of thought rather than emotion in the ancient world, therefore having a merry heart may also have referred to lower levels of awareness or intellect. Several stories in the Hebrew Bible use having a merry heart as a device for ensuring a successful attack on a target. For example, in 2 Sam 13:28a Absalom times his attack on Amnon with Amnon's drunkenness: 'Then Absalom commanded his servants, "Watch when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon,' then kill him.' The successful killing of Amnon despite being surrounded by his brothers at a large feast (v. 27) may be believable in this narrative because of Amnon's weakened position. This phenomenon is observed by the anthropologist Monica Smith, who has written on the risks involved with holding feasts: 'Rival groups may choose to attack during feast-times as an occasion when people let down their guard or are physically less capable of repelling an attack'.[845] This device is also used in the story of King Elah's assassination in 1 King 16:8-10:

> In the twenty-sixth year of King Asa of Judah, Elah son of Baasha began to reign over Israel in Tirzah; he reigned two years. But his servant Zimri, commander of half his chariots, conspired against him. When he was at Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, who was in charge of the house at Tirzah, Zimri came in and struck him down and killed him, in the twenty-seventh year of King Asa of Judah, and succeeded him.

Although this passage doesn't mentioned Elah's heart being merry, the same idea is at play. In Elah's drunken state he becomes an easy target despite being in the house which was guarded or watched over by Arza. The narrative device of being drunk is again used on a larger scale to account for Ahab's slaughter of

[845] Monica L. Smith, 'Feasts and their Failures', *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 22 (2015), 1223.

Ben-hadad, the king of Aram, who brought a very large army to siege Samaria. In 1 King 20:12 the narrative tells us that Ben-hadad, after drinking much wine with the other kings, commands his army, cavalry, and chariots to take up their positions for attack. After receiving a prophecy from Yahweh that the Arameans would be delivered into Ahab's hand, the narrative continues:

> They went out at noon, while Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the booths, he and the thirty-two kings allied with him. The young men who served the district governors went out first. Ben-hadad had sent out scouts, and they reported to him, 'Men have come out from Samaria.' He said, 'If they have come out for peace, take them alive; if they have come out for war, take them alive.' But these had already come out of the city: the young men who served the district governors, and the army that followed them. Each killed his man; the Arameans fled and Israel pursued them, but King Ben-hadad of Aram escaped on a horse with the cavalry. The king of Israel went out, attacked the horses and chariots, and defeated the Arameans with a great slaughter. (1 King 20:16-21)

Yahweh instigates the attack by encouraging Ahab to attack that day, but it seems that the narrator feels it necessary to account for the ease of victory by having Ben-hadad depicted as a confused drunkard. This has not escaped the notice of commentators: 'Ben-hadad is already scandalously drunk at noon when the coming attack is reported to the bleary-eyed king, he seems more muddled than blood thirsty, for the Israelites are to be taken alive whatever their intent.'[846] Marvin Sweeney also picks up on the reduction in cognitive ability that seems associated with Ben-hadad's drunkenness:

> The decision to attack at noon gave the Arameans plenty of time to drink, by noon they would be wasted…His response to take

[846] Simon J. De Vries, *1 Kings* (Waco: Word Incorporated, 1985), 249.

> them alive whether they came out to surrender or to fight indicates drunken lack of judgement.[847]

Drunkenness then simultaneously makes the heart merry but it also renders the heart less capable of responding to militaristic or murderous attacks. In either case alcohol is an agent, having impact both psychologically and physiologically. That alcohol renders its drinkers incapable of defending themselves is particularly pertinent to the biblical motif of the Cup of Wrath – a motif functioning as an effective metaphor on the basis that drunkenness was known to cause extreme helplessness in the face of utter destruction. It is to this Cup that the discussion shall now turn.

5.4 The Cup of Wrath Motif

The Cup of Wrath motif employs images associated with drunkenness to convey Yahweh's punishment and destruction of both Israel/Judah and other nations, and particularly appears in prophetic books in the Hebrew Bible.[848] The motif offers some of the most colourful and detailed depictions of drunkenness which, because of their striking nature and common usage, could not be missed from this discussion. The motif of being offered a cup functions as a vehicle for the inescapable fate of punishment likely because of the social custom of receiving a drink from a host which could not be refused.[849] Social drinking is culturally bound up with expectations of appropriate displays of giving and receiving:

> Perhaps the most widespread social function of drinking is facilitating social interaction and channelling the flow of social relations. Where it is consumed at all, alcohol is almost universally an integral part of the etiquette of hospitality. The intimate association with hospitality imbues alcohol with a potent social value because it becomes a key element in establishing relations

[847] Marvin A. Sweeney, *I & II Kings* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 242.
[848] Jer 25:15-29, 49:12-13, 51:7; Hab 2:15-16; Lam 4:21; Ezek 23:31-34; Obad 1:16; Zech 12:2; Isa 51:17-23. In non-prophetic texts see: Job 21:20; Ps 60:3, 75:8.
[849] Walter Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (London: SCM Press, 1970), 331.

> of reciprocal obligation that bind together guest and host…However, it should not be assumed from this that it serves to simply promote social solidarity. Relations of social inequality, and hence underlying tensions of social conflict, are often expressed and even created in the very patterns of social interaction that promote solidarity.[850]

As a vehicle for social manoeuvring and negotiation, which must remain within the strict boundaries of 'reciprocal obligation that bind together guest and host', the offering of a cup serves as a gesture of hospitality which, if refused, would be considered rude if not offensive. Nevertheless, it is this social role of alcohol which is utilised to subvert the positive connotations of alcohol consumption. As an agent which maintains positive social relations, alcohol can also destroy those relations. Consequently, in this motif, alcohol represents the utter disruption of sociability between parties: humans and Yahweh.

The motif also plays on the notion of a cup being an allotted portion for the recipient, as in Ps 16:5: 'Yahweh is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.'[851] The eschatological banquet is an apocalyptic image which commonly depicts Yahweh's restoration of Israel and other nations by placing them under his protection as a divine host (Isa 25:6). However, in the image of the Cup of Wrath, it is divine destruction that awaits, rather than peaceful feasting. Drinking from the Cup of Wrath is a demonstration of the inescapable and destructive portion that Yahweh has decided upon for the recipient. Jeremiah states this explicitly: 'For thus says Yahweh: If those who do not deserve to drink the cup still have to drink it, shall you be the one to go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished; you must drink it' (Jer 49:12). Other texts emphasise the compulsion to drink down the contents of the cup, and thus the inevitability of the punishment, by presenting the drinker as greedy and eager to drink every drop: 'For as you have drunk on my holy mountain, all the nations around you shall drink; they shall drink and gulp down, and shall be as though they had never been' (Obad 1:16); 'For in the hand of Yahweh there is a cup with

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[850] Michael Dietler, 'Consumption, Agency, and Cultural Entanglement: Theoretical Implications of a Mediterranean Colonial Encounter' in J. Cusick ed., *Studies in Culture Contact: Interaction, Culture Change, and Archaeology* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1998), 302.
[851] See also Ps 11:6; 32:5.

foaming wine, full of spice; he will pour a draught from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs' (Ps 75:8). These examples allude to what appears to be a more developed and widely known religio-literary motif amongst the scribes. The two most elaborate passages of this motif are found in Jer 25:15-29 and Isa 51:17-23:

> For thus Yahweh, the God of Israel, said to me: Take from my hand this Cup of the Wine of Wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. They shall drink and stagger and go mad before the sword that I am sending among them.
> So I took the cup from Yahweh's hand, and made all the nations to whom Yahweh sent me drink it: Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, its kings and officials, to make them a desolation and a waste, an object of hissing and of cursing, as they are today; Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his officials, and all his people; all the mixed people;… And after them the king of Sheshach (Babylon) shall drink.
> Then you shall say to them, thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink, get drunk and vomit, fall and rise no more, because of the sword that I am sending among you.
> And if they refuse to accept the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them: Thus says Yahweh of hosts: You must drink! See, I am beginning to bring disaster on the city that is called by my name, and how can you possibly avoid punishment? You shall not go unpunished, for I am summoning a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth, says Yahweh of hosts. (Jer. 25:15-20a, 26b-29.)

> Rouse yourself, rouse yourself!
> Stand up, O Jerusalem,
> you who have drunk at the hand of Yahweh,
> the Cup of his Wrath,
> who have drunk to the dregs the cup of trembling.

There is no one to guide her
among all the children she has borne;
there is no one to take her by the hand
among all the children she has brought up.
These two things have befallen you
—who will grieve with you?—
devastation and destruction, famine and sword—
who will comfort you?

Your children have fainted,
they lie at the head of every street
like an antelope in a net;
they are full of the wrath of Yahweh,
the rebuke of your God.
Therefore hear this, you who are afflicted,
who are drunk, but not with wine:
Thus says your Sovereign, Yahweh,
your God who pleads the cause of his people:
See, I have taken from your hand the Cup of Trembling;
you shall drink no more from the Cup of my Wrath.
And I will put it into the hand of your tormentors,
who have said to you,
“Bow down, that we may walk on you”;
and you have made your back like the ground
and like the street for them to walk on. (Isa 51:17-23.)

The Cup of Wrath serves as a metaphor for Yahweh’s meting out of punishment: Yahweh is a cupbearer who offers the nations an alcoholic beverage they cannot refuse (Jer 25:28). This beverage then paves the way for the unstoppable destruction of either Yahweh’s sword (Jer 25:16) or ‘famine and sword’ (Isa 51:19). Effectively, the Cup of Wrath is a metaphor for invasion and war configured as a punishment from Yahweh. The extract from Jeremiah says the narrator made the nations, including Jerusalem, drink from Yahweh’s Cup of Wrath (v. 17) until they become drunk, vomit, fall and then, because of

the sword Yahweh sends, they will not arise again (Jer 25:17). Vomiting is featured in other occurrences of the Cup of Wrath: 'Make him drunk, because he magnified himself against Yahweh; let Moab wallow in his vomit; he too shall become a laughingstock' (Jer 48:26).[852]

In the extract from Isaiah, Jerusalem, personified as a woman (v.18), has already drunk from the cup and experienced the destruction of Yahweh's fury. Brevard Childs compares Jerusalem here to Babylon: 'Dame Jerusalem is first encouraged to rouse herself and to stand. The image is the exact opposite of that given to the daughter of Babylon (chapter 47), who is ordered to sit on the ground and to strip in order to reveal her shame.'[853] Because Jerusalem has already consumed the Cup of Wrath the effects are listed: she is collapsed (v.17), her children have fainted on the streets (v.20), they have experienced famine and conflict (v.19), and are utterly helpless like an animal in a net. Yahweh promises, however, to take the cup from her hand. He passes the Cup of Wrath to Jerusalem's oppressors so that they too may become drunk and stagger. The way Yahweh controls the length of punishment is presented as being dependent on having possession of his cup. This possibly plays with the idea that wine was so tantalising and hard to refuse that as long as a full cup is in hand the drinking will not stop.

It is striking that getting drunk precedes the attack by the sword, while in some narratives, as discussed above, a merry heart, or drunkenness, precedes a successful attack on the drinker. The swords of the Babylonians will complement the vulnerability of drunkenness generated by Yahweh.[854] It is evident that drunkenness is a metaphor which simply assures the certainty of the destruction because Yahweh is able to make a nation a 'Cup of Wrath' in relation to other nations. For example: 'Babylon was a golden cup in Yahweh's hand, making all the earth drunken; the nations drank of her wine, and so the nations went mad' (Jer 51:7). Similarly for Jerusalem: 'See, I am about to make Jerusalem a Cup of Trembling for all the surrounding peoples; when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem' (Zech 12:2). Being

[852] See also Isa 19:14.
[853] Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster Press, 2001), 405.
[854] Jack Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36 A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Doubleday, 2004), 260.

made into Yahweh's cup is a metaphor for being a device of Yahweh which will invade and destroy another nation. The drunkenness caused by the cup puts the target of Yahweh's destruction in a vulnerable state, hence the use of 'trembling' by Zechariah (cf. Nah 3:11). This conveys the fear and sense of inevitability of their death and suffering.[855] The Cup of Wrath motif, then, appears to be utilising known features of drunkenness which make the metaphor work effectively. The experience of Yahweh's wrath is being explicated through the lens of drunkenness. In this case it is the helplessness and inevitability of being invaded; however, further features of drunkenness are also used.

As discussed above, drunkenness is particularly disparaged when it incapacitates elites, such as priests, prophets or rulers, preventing them from properly carrying out their duties. This derision is aimed at Israel's own elites, who are depicted as being responsible for Yahweh's anger because of their lack of professional conduct. In the Cup of Wrath motif, elites are also singled out as the target of Yahweh's cup, because of the awareness that this will lead the targeted nation into disarray. Sometimes, the cup itself is not mentioned but instead the image of Yahweh pouring is used. This image is fitting as it continues to depict Yahweh as a cupbearer of destruction, for example:

> The princes of Zoan have become fools,
> and the princes of Memphis are deluded;
> those who are the cornerstones of its tribes
> have led Egypt astray.
> Yahweh has poured into them
> a spirit of confusion;
> and they have made Egypt stagger in all its doings
> as a drunkard staggers around in vomit. (Isa 19:13-14; cf. Jer 51:57)

Rather than passing a cup to Egypt, Yahweh instead (more forcefully) pours confusion into the mouths of its princes. The metaphorical nature is made more

[855] See also Ps 60:3: 'You have made your people suffer hard things; you have given us wine to drink that made us tremble.'

explicit by saying that they stagger in their doings *like* a drunkard, rather than saying they *are* drunk. The princes are specifically targeted by Yahweh in this text because the scribe is aware of the damage that 'staggering' elites can do to a nation. The princes have led the people into chaos just as the elites in the passages discussed above (Isa 5:11-12, 22; Isa 28:7-8 Eccl 10:16-17) also risk ruling chaotically if they do not drink in an appropriate manner. Prophets of surrounding nations are also the target of Yahweh's forced drunkenness during the siege of Jerusalem:

> Stupefy yourselves and be in a stupor,
> blind yourselves and be blind!
> Be drunk, but not from wine;
> stagger, but not from beer!
> For Yahweh has poured out upon you
> a spirit of deep sleep;
> he has closed your eyes, you prophets,
> and covered your heads, you seers. (Isa 29:9-10; cf. Jer 51:57)

It is clear by the statement 'be drunk, but not from wine' that the experience of drunkenness caused by Yahweh's force-feeding is not about the nations actually becoming drunk. Instead, it is suggesting that the known phenomena or features associated with excessive consumption of alcohol, as discussed above in relation to elites, renders the drinker as vulnerable as when Yahweh brings about his judgement. In this particular extract, the feature of drunkenness being emphasised is that of falling asleep as found in the stories of Noah and Lot (Gen 9:18-25; Gen 19:31-36). The prophets have lost their capacity for communication with their deities. Their uselessness then ensures Jerusalem's victory and survival over the attacking forces. Jeremiah also uses this feature of drunkenness in relation to elites in chapter 51:

> When they are inflamed, I will set out their drink
> and make them drunk, until they become merry
> and then sleep a perpetual sleep
> and never wake, says Yahweh.

I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter,
like rams and goats. (vv. 39- 40; cf. v.57; 13:12-14)

Jeremiah uses the vulnerability induced by being passed out in a drunken state as an opportunity to slaughter the Babylonians like unaware animals. Human agency is reduced to the point that the Babylonians have become animal-like objects for Yahweh to destroy and devour. The statement that they will become merry is ironic in that the situation will quickly be reversed when they are destroyed. The image of falling asleep because of drinking is also exaggerated here in that the sleep is perpetual. A drunkard will wake up after a night's drinking (Prov 23:35) but the drunkenness Yahweh imposes on them is permanent; they will not awake because they will be dead. That the officials, sages, governors, deputies, and warriors will be the targets of Yahweh's incapacitating beverage suggests again that what is disparaged about the elites in Israel or Judah getting drunk is the context. Elites have responsibilities to the rest of the nation which are undermined when incapacitated by inebriation. The Cup of Wrath metaphor employs this anxiety to determine the defeat of Yahweh's enemies by applying it to enemy nations' elites. With the prophets unable to prophesy and the top ranking officials debilitated, Babylon is a headless chicken.

Another feature of drunkenness highlighted above is the aphrodisiacal quality of alcohol and the way in which it appears to have been used to facilitate sexual interactions. The Cup of Wrath motif also draws on this known feature of drunkenness but subverts it into an image of sexual shamefulness:

Alas for you who make your neighbours drink,
pouring out your wrath until they are drunk,
in order to gaze on their nakedness!
You are filled with shame instead of glory.
You also—drink!
And be exposed as uncircumcised!
The cup of Yahweh's right hand will be turned against you,
And utter shame will be on your glory. (Hab 2:15-16)

This text appears to talk about Babylon as a cup from which other nations get drunk, as also in Jer 51:7. However, in Habakkuk, the feature of drunkenness that is being emphasised is the sexually arousing quality of wine, as presented in Song of Songs, for example (Song 2:15; 7:8-9, 12; 8:2-4). Like Lot's daughters, who feed their father wine to ensure that he will be sexually receptive to their attempts at procreation (Gen 19:30-8), Babylon is metaphorically depicted as abusing the vulnerability of those they have saturated with alcohol. Babylon has manipulated surrounding nations to bare themselves and their shame.[856] This metaphor works because of the known ability of wine to encourage sexual behaviour. Babylon's rule over other nations is cast as an act of manipulation using wine. However, the cup will be turned around and against them, the Babylonians, and Yahweh's wine will cause them to reveal their shame also. The scribe of Habakkuk increases the shame of this act by emphasising the Babylonians' uncircumcised penises, which were presumably viewed as particularly transgressive, and even polluting, to the Israelite scribes.[857]

Female sexual shame is the more common target of this metaphor's attacks. Nakedness of the feminine body is used in relation to the Cup of Wrath in Lam 4:21: 'Rejoice and be glad, O daughter Edom, you that live in the land of Uz; but to you also the cup shall pass; you shall become drunk and strip yourself bare.' Rendering Edom as a female 'daughter' who will, in her drunken state, feel encouraged to behave erotically is based on the idea of female sexual shame:

> Drinking from the cup of wrath is in turn, associated with nakedness and shame. Edom, personified as a woman, thereby has female sexual shame attached to her, as Jerusalem did in chapter 1. Edom will bare her body, and God will expose her sins. The enemy is now the immoral woman while Zion's sins have been paid for and she is once again virtuous.[858]

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[856] Johanna Stiebert, 'Shame and the body in Psalms and Lamentations of the Hebrew Bible and in Thanksgiving Hymns from Qumran', *Old Testament Essays* 20 (2007), 819, n.41.
[857] On the polluting nature of the alien male's foreskin see Olyan, *Rites and Rank,* 48.
[858] Adele Berlin, *Lamentations* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002) 114.

The Babylonians had to be uncircumcised for the shame to be foregrounded, but by casting Edom as a woman her nakedness is shameful enough. The uncircumcised body and the female body are equally transgressive. As the Cup of Wrath is a metaphor for warfare, Stiebert's observation of the use of violence against women in other exilic texts is pertinent:

> Prostitution and violence against women, both of which feature in the feminized metaphors, are likely to have belonged to the ugly reality of warfare: they are described in passing in various prophetic texts (e.g. Amos 1.13; 7.17; Joel 3.3; Hos. 13.16; Lam. 5.11; Jer. 8.10) and such is the case to this day. The metaphor may thus be referred in the sense that it incorporates actual experience into the metaphor.[859]

The nakedness of women in an invasion context may thus be drawn from the real life occurrence of rape by foreign invaders. In this sense then, the Cup of Wrath motif combines the idea that alcohol encourages sexual behaviour with the humiliating experiences of rape which were likely an historical reality in the chaos of invasion. Consequently, the metaphor is rendered vivid and intensely evocative because of the pool of shared knowledge of drunkenness and warfare on which the metaphor draws.

Another woman who is forced to drink the Cup of Wrath is Oholibah, a cypher for Jerusalem, the sister of Oholah representing Samaria:

> You have gone the way of your sister; therefore I will give her cup into your hand. Thus says the Lord Yahweh:
>
> You shall drink your sister's cup,
> deep and wide (העמקה והרחבה);
> you shall be scorned and derided,
> it holds so much.
> You shall be filled with drunkenness and sorrow.
> A cup of horror and desolation

[859] Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame*, 102.

is the cup of your sister Samaria;
you shall drink it and drain it out,
and gnaw its sherds,
and tear off your breasts. (Ezek 23:31-34)

This extract follows the common features of the motif used elsewhere such as the passing of cup, drunkenness and punishment. Paul Raabe remarks that 'her gnawing of the cup's shards and lacerating her breasts push the image of a drunken woman to the extreme.'[860] Is this really a depiction of an extremely drunken woman, or the acts of self-harm by a traumatised and abused victim? Earlier in the chapter Oholibah and Oholah are figured as sexually active women in foreign countries:

> They played the whore in Egypt; they played the whore in their youth; their breasts were pressed there, and the teats of their maidenhood were squeezed (v.3).

In light of this use of Oholibah's breasts, the lacerating, possibly with the shards of the Cup of Wrath, is particularly disturbing. Note this comment from Daniel Block, who appears to be oblivious to the misogyny of this text:

> Matching her earlier passion for her lovers, Oholibah's thirst for more will be so intense that she will break the cup into sherds… She who has shamelessly craved the fondling of her breasts by her lovers will tear them off in her inexpressible grief…She would answer fully for her prurient whoredom.[861]

Oholibah, rather than actively pursuing sex partners, is *acted upon* by the men of Egypt who assault her breasts while she is still in her youth. As Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes articulates, the translation is more adequately rendered: 'They

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[860] Paul R. Raabe, *Obadiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 231.
[861] Daniel I. Block*, The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1-24* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 756.

were sexually molested in Egypt, in their youth they were sexually abused'.[862] The text continues:

> Yet she increased her whorings, remembering the days of her youth, when she played the whore in the land of Egypt and lusted after her paramours there, whose members were like those of donkeys, and whose emission was like that of stallions. Thus you longed for the lewdness of your youth, when the Egyptians squeezed your teats and young breasts (vv. 19-21).

The sense in which the scribe of Ezekiel wishes to depict these women/cities as sexually transgressive is evident in the language used, presumably to cast the women with shame, but really it says more about the male author's psyche than Oholibah:

> The depiction of Oholibah's desire in terms of the size of (animal-like) male members seems not just an example of mere misnaming of female experience, but an actual distortion of it. Instead of reflecting female desire, this depiction betrays male obsession.[863]

The sexual content of this chapter is likely playing with the link between sex and alcohol discussed above. The author appears to know that wine is associated with the erotic and depicts Oholibah drinking more and more as an illustration of her 'thirsting' after more sexual encounters with other nations – or perhaps she drinks to forget her experience of sexual abuse. She pushes the sherds of the Cup of Wrath into herself and removes from her body the outward expression of her sexual experiences in a subversion of the usually positive use of wine in lovemaking. Instead, the cup becomes a punishment, though undeservedly, for Oholibah's sexual contact with Egypt.

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[862] Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes, 'The Metaphoricalization of Woman in Prophetic Speech: An Analysis of Ezekiel 23' in Athalya Brenner ed. *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 250-1.
[863] Dijk-Hemmes, 'The Metaphoricalization of Woman in Prophetic Speech', 253.

Oholibah drinks and ‘drains’ a cup that is exaggeratedly large. It is described as ‘deep and wide’ (העמקה והרחבה), the same adjectives used to describe the place of burning, or the Tophet, in Isa 30:33 (העמיק הרחב). This perhaps emphasises the totality of the punishment entailed in both Isa 30:33 and Ezek 23:31 and the inescapable nature, or fate, which looms over the victims. Yahweh’s wrath and Oholibah’s fate are all consuming, so much so that she consumes not just the liquid but the cup itself, pushing the broken shards into her body. Here the Cup of Wrath, vessel and all, are ingested one way or the other; not because she is drunk but because she has no other way to express her distress at the wrath of Yahweh and the way she has been treated.

The Cup of Wrath motif utilises what was already known about drunkenness by the scribes of the Hebrew Bible texts. The features of drunkenness are then adapted or subverted to forcefully and sensuously convey the experience of Yahweh’s divine wrath. A case could be made that drunkenness was perceived as an overall negative behaviour by the biblical scribes, but I would disagree. The features of drunkenness are exaggerated and subverted in order to render them a form of punishment. Usually, wine is symbolic of joy and fertility, but in the Cup of Wrath motif it is reversed and turned into a symbol of destruction and sexual transgression. The divine eschatological banquet metaphor is reversed in Ezek 39:17-20 so that animals are invited by Yahweh to feast on the human flesh of Gog’s army. In the Cup of Wrath imagery the metaphor of serving wine to demonstrate hospitality and encourage merriment is reversed so instead wine becomes a dangerous toxin as opposed to an appreciated, social beverage. The metaphor likely worked so effectively because drunkenness is a tangible, embodied experience which can be all-possessing. Alcohol’s ability to alter the mind and body, and even create a shift in the perception of the environment, made it a powerful vehicle to express divine punishment, a divine punishment that would be wholly experienced by the body. It is the refraction of the positive associations of wine that make the metaphor so powerfully terrifying, rather than the idea that drunkenness was already perceived to be overly transgressive. Intoxication is reimagined to represent the dangerous rather than beatific actions of Yahweh.

5.5 Summary

Much like the ambivalent attitudes of the scribes towards excessive consumption or engorgement, so too does the consumption of alcohol hold a contradictory position in the Hebrew Bible. On the one hand, wine and beer bring joy and relief from the strains and monotony of daily life. Excessive consumption of beer and wine, however, is restricted in relation to particular functions. Elites who mediate for Yahweh, either by carrying out Yahweh's justice in protecting the poor and vulnerable or by maintaining the order of Yahweh's creation through demarcating what is clean and unclean, are required to have a sober mind. The aphrodisiacal qualities of beer and wine are well known across ancient southwest Asian cultures, so too in Hebrew Bible texts. This also makes it a useful device for the manipulation of others in acts of procreation. These known features of alcohol are used in a remarkably potent way in the motif of the Cup of Wrath, which symbolises the unstoppable fate that Yahweh's wrath entails. In these examples, it is the subversion of alcohol that makes the images terrifying. In applying the qualities of drunkenness to the befuddled prophets of other nations, uncircumcised aliens and promiscuous female figures, the idea of drunkenness is subverted beyond its usual understandings. Drunkenness is not inherently problematic for the biblical scribes; instead it is a blessing, an example of Yahweh's intention that humans should enjoy his creation.

But an important question remains: how are any of the specific contexts addressed in the texts examined in this chapter related to the Rebellious Son of Deuteronomy 21? He is neither priest, prophet, prince nor king. He is not accused of using alcohol to sexually manipulate another. He is not understood to be representative of a foreign nation who should deserve the Cup of Wrath from Yahweh. It is therefore difficult to identify biblical anxieties relating to drunkenness with the accusation of being 'a drunkard', as so many English translations have done. The Rebellious Son is accused of being a סבא but is seems unreasonable to equate this with being a שׁכור (Isa 24:20). The following chapter will discuss what a סבא may have been and whether this interpretation is more applicable to the Rebellious Son.

Chapter Six: ‘Deviant’ Consumption in the Hebrew Bible

6.1 Overview

Having argued in previous chapters that the crime of the Rebellious Son in Deut 21:18-21 is not the excessive consumption of food or alcohol, this chapter will offer a more nuanced account of the behaviours proscribed by the scribes of Deuteronomy. This chapter will take into account the ritual roles of food and alcohol and in particular, their roles as socio-religious agents in the construction and maintenance of social relationships. Unlike those scholars who read Prov 23:19-21 (the only other text which mentions both זולל and סבא) and Deut 21:18-19 as a literary pair to render the Rebellious Son an excessive consumer, I will begin by examining episodes of consumption which are treated similarly to, or share language with, Deut 21:18-21. This will disrupt the conventional arguments, discussed in the introduction, that use a circular reasoning and thus distort the texts’ meaning. The chapter will then return to the book of Deuteronomy and compare the law of the Rebellious Son to other laws in Deuteronomy, arguing that the same ideology of centralised Yahweh worship is promulgated by the law of the Rebellious Son as it is in other laws in Deuteronomy.

6.2 Episodes of Consumption with Similarities to Deut 21:18-21

When compared with other texts, there are three particular features of the law of the Rebellious Son which may point towards the kinds of behaviour the scribes of Deuteronomy perceived as both deviant and deserving of execution. These features will be examined in turn and used to identify acts of consumption in the Hebrew Bible which may be of a piece with the consumption referred to in the law of the Rebellious Son. These three features are: 1) behaviour described as ‘rebellious’; 2) consumers who are judged and/or executed; 3) behaviour described as ‘evil’.

The law reads as follows:

> If someone has a rebellious (סורר) and defiant (מורה) son who will not obey (שׁמע) the voice of his father and mother, who does not heed (ישׁמע) them when they discipline him (ויסרו), then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his town at the gate of that place. They shall say to the elders of his town, 'This son of ours is rebellious and defiant. He will not obey us. He is a זולל and a סבא.' Then all the men of the town shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge (ובערת) the evil (הרע) from your midst; and all Israel will hear and fear (וירעו). (Deut 21:18-21)

The Rebellious Son is most likely rebellious against Yahweh rather than his mother and father. He is twice described as סורר and מורה, terms which are effectively synonyms of each other meaning 'rebellious'. סורר is the rarer of the two roots, occurring 17 times, while מורה is more common, occurring 43 times.[864] In the Hebrew Bible, the rebellion to which these words refer always appears to be against Yahweh or his law rather than against another human being.[865] Best known, perhaps, is the portrayal of ploughing animals as rebellious towards their masters, which is used as a metaphor for Israel's rebellion against Yahweh.[866] Therefore, although it may appear that the parents in Deut 21:18-21 are accusing their son of rebelling against them, these words likely carry the weight of their common usage across biblical texts and thus imply rebellion against Yahweh. There are two stages of the crime: first, the parents state that

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[864] מרה: Num 20:10, 24; Num 27:14; Deut 1:16, 43; Deut 9:7, 23, 24: Deut 21:18, 20; Deut 31:27; Josh 1:18; 1 Sam 12:14, 15; 1 King 13:21, 26; Neh 9:26; Job 17:2; Ps 5:10; Ps 78:8, 17, 40, 56; Ps 105:28; Ps 106: 7, 33, 43; Ps 107:11; Isa 1:20; Isa 3:8; Isa 50:5; Isa 63:10; Jer 4:17; Jer 5:23; Lam 1:18, 20; Lam 3:4; Ezek 5:6; Ezek 20:8, 13, 21; Hos 13:16. In addition, once meaning 'bitter' in 2 King 14:26. סרר: Deut 21:18, 20; Neh 9:29; Ps 66:7; Ps 68:6, 18; Ps 78:8; Prov 7:11; Isa 1:23; Isa 30:1; Isa 65:2; Jer 5:23; Jer 6:28; Hos 4:16, Hos 9:15; Zech 7:11.

[865] Bruno Clifton also sees a strong correlation between the Rebellious Son and instances where Israel is also described as סורר and/or מורה. 'What if Israel was God's stubborn and Rebellious Son? Deuteronomy 21:18–21; Jeremiah 5:23; Psalm 78:8', *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 20 (2014), 117, 120-123. Indeed, this correlation is well established: Jonathan P. Burnside, *The Signs of Sin: Seriousness of Offence in Biblical Law* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 42; Anselm C. Hagedorn, 'Guarding the Parents' Honour—Deuteronomy 21.18-21', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 24 (2000), 104; Elizabeth Bellefontaine, 'Deuteronomy 21: 18-21: Reviewing the Case of the Rebellious Son', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament,* 13 (1979), 17-19.

[866] References to withdrawing the shoulder and stiffening the neck likely refer to the difficult act of putting a ploughing harness on non-compliant draft animals. See Deut 31:17; Neh 2:29; Hos 4:16; Zech 7:11. The only example in which סרר may not be being used in relation to Yahweh occurs in Prov 7:11, where the figure of Lady Folly is referenced. As no other individual is mentioned to identify who she is rebellious against, we may assume that Yahweh or Yahweh's law may still be in view here.

their son has rebelled against Yahweh and then they state that he has not listened to them even when they have disciplined him in order to deter him from rebelling against Yahweh.[867] Both divine law and social law are being disrupted by the son. Episodes of consumption portrayed as breaking the law of Yahweh, or which include the lexemes סורר or מורה, may thus help us to understand the crime of the Rebellious Son.

The crime of the Rebellious Son is serious enough to warrant civil judgement and religious execution. The son is brought to the city gates, a cultic location, where the city elders are authorised to pass judgement and sentence an individual who has committed a crime. Being of the older generation the city elders are able to deal with the breach of divine law which regular social structures (i.e. the parents) were unable to address. The punishment itself, stoning to death, is carried out communally – all the men of the town participate in the son's execution. Thus, while the elders of the city sentence the son to death, the community as a whole is complicit in meting out his punishment, suggesting that the son is deemed sufficiently harmful to the social body that they act as one in removing that harm. Indeed, the text of Deut 21:18-21 tells us that the stoning will purge the evil (הרע) from the midst of the community. Episodes of consumption in which judgement is passed and followed with the execution of the consumer may also function as possible examples of the kinds of behaviour alluded to in the law of the Rebellious Son.

The phrase 'so you shall purge (ובערת) the evil (הרע) from your midst' is unique to Deuteronomy and applies to other crimes such as ignoring a divine judgement, and committing murder, false witness, and kidnap-and-sale.[868] Known as the *bi'artā* provision, Tikva Frymer-Kensky has understood this phrase in terms of pollution, and compares it to other polluting acts in the Hebrew Bible:

> The concern about collective responsibility indicated by the stoning laws and the *bi'artā* provisions can also be expressed in the language of pollution. Necromancy is considered polluting (Lev 19:31), as are Molech-worship (Ezek 20:26, 30-31) and

[867] Burnside, *The Signs of Sin,* 50-51.
[868] Deut 17:12; 19:11-13, 16-21; 22:22; 24:7.

> idolatry (Ezek 14:11; 20:31; cf. 22:3-4; 23: 7-38). All forms of apostasy pollute the people, and this pollution does not disappear with time (Josh 22:17).[869]

Frymer-Kensky sees collective responsibility as a theme in both the command to 'purge the evil from your midst' and other polluting behaviours. The polluting actions of an individual does not simply render him/her polluted, but the whole people. Thus, it is in the collective's interest to remove such a pollutant in order that punishment does not befall the people as a whole (Josh 22:18). While forms of apostasy are not the only behaviours that 'pollute' the people, it is telling that cultic crimes are among these pollutants – particularly given that they are rites that can involve acts of consumption, and so are particularly pertinent to the discussion below. Thus, acts of consumption which are described as being רע, perhaps because they are perceived to be polluting in some way, may also shed light on the crime of the Rebellious Son as perceived by the scribe of Deut 21:18-21.

Having presented the three key features of the law of the Rebellious Son I will now examine cases of consumption in the Hebrew Bible which share one or more of these features, beginning with consumption in the worship of other gods. I will subsequently address consumption associated with mortuary rites and consumption in Yahweh's cult.

6.2.1 'Deviant' Consumption in the Worship of Other Gods

> But you who abandon (עזבי) Yahweh,
> who forget (הַשְּׁכחִים) my holy mountain,
> who set a table for Gad (לגד)
> and fill cups with spiced wine for Meni (למני);
> I will destine (ומניתי) you to the sword,
> and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter;
> because, when I called, you did not answer,

[869] Tikva Frymer-Kensky, 'Pollution, Purification and Purgation in Biblical Israel' in C. L. Meyers and M. O'Connor eds. *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of his Sixtieth Birthday* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 407.

> when I spoke, you did not listen (שׁמעתם),
> but you did what was evil (הרע) in my sight,
> and chose what I did not delight in. (Isa 65:11-12)

Several aspects of this passage are pertinent to the law of the Rebellious Son. The verbs עזב and שׁכח are frequently used to convey Israel's rejection of Yahweh in favour of other deities, thus likely rendering Gad and Meni here as divine figures.[870] Indeed, Gad was a deity associated with fortune; Ugaritic, Amorite, Phoenician and Punic onomastic evidence suggests he was worshipped across Syria, Palestine and the Levant.[871] Meni is less well attested but may be related to Manāt, a pre-Islamic goddess listed in the Qur'an, who also was associated with fate and fortune.[872]

The wording of the food-related activities in v.11 may suggest an 'especially generous' offering or meal for the deities, especially compared with similar phrases in Ps 23:5 and Prov 9:2.[873] These two poetic texts are particularly interesting in that it is Yahweh (Ps 23:5) and the divine Lady Wisdom (Prov 9:2) who set the table and spice the wine for human consumers. The idea of a cultic, communal meal between deities and human worshippers implies consumption in honour of the deities. In Isa 65:11-12 the drinks are not poured out solely to them, nor is food burnt for them with nothing left for the human participants. Rather, the setting of a table and the pouring of wine into cups indicates commensality between participants, both divine and human, as indicated in the texts featuring a meal between Yahweh and Lady Wisdom. In this meal, Gad and Meni are enveloped into the social lives of the human worshippers; they are acknowledged as mutual consumers, sharing in food and drink with their worshippers. This contrasts with the people's anti-sociality in relation to Yahweh – they do not answer his call (v.12), he is abandoned and thus displaced from his rightful social location among his worshippers. Instead, Gad and Meni are

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[870] Jud 2:12, 13; 10:6; 1 Sam 8:8; Deut 8:14; Jer 13:25; Hos 2:15. S. David Sperling, 'Meni' in Karel Van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter Willem van der Horst eds. *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden: Eerdmans, 1999), 567.
[871] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 278; Sergio Ribichini, 'Gad' in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons*, 339-40.
[872] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66,* 279; Sperling, 'Meni', 567-8.
[873] John Goldingay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 56-66* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 459.

placed in the social network and Yahweh, as a jealous god, cannot abide the commensality offered to them by those who should worship him.

It is impossible to know whether the group addressed in this text was engaging in these activities alongside Yahweh worship (as a form of 'syncretic' worship) or if they had replaced Yahweh with other deities.[874] Either way, they are judged by Yahweh; his decision is clear: their behaviour is deemed to be 'evil' (רע), as in the case of the crime of the Rebellious Son. Yahweh judges and then executes; in a telling play on Meni's name (מני), Yahweh 'destines' (ומניתי) these consumers to death by 'sword' and 'slaughter', a fate they will be unable to avoid as a result of their non-Yahwistic consumption.[875] Yahweh responds to exclusion from this feast by destroying the participants and thus forces the disbandment of their social network. In so doing he asserts his exclusive presence in Zion. The similarities between the way in which this act of consumption is described and punished and the crime in Deut 21:18-21 is perhaps indicative of the kind of activity in which the Rebellious Son was assumed to be engaged.

Israel's worship of other gods, which includes sacrificing to and eating with them, prompts Yahweh's anger in Num 25:1-5:

> While Israel was staying at Shittim, the people began to whore with (לזנת) the women of Moab.[876] These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. Thus Israel yoked itself to Ba'al Peor, and Yahweh's anger was kindled against Israel. Yahweh said to Moses, 'Take all the chiefs of the people, and impale them facing the sun before

[874] Goldingay is of the opinion that Yahweh worship at the Jerusalem Temple has been completely abandoned, *Isaiah 56-66,* 459. Whereas, Blenkinsopp thinks it is more likely that Yahwistic temple worship was being practised at the same time as cultic practices for other deities, Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66,* 278. Nonetheless, a group or community appears to be in view, and Blenkinsopp goes as far as to label them a 'sect'. Joseph Blenkinsopp, 'A Jewish Sect of the Persian Period', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990), 11, 19-20.

[875] Claus Westermann suggests that the reference to 'slaughter' and 'sword' 'must mean destruction in war', *Isaiah 40-60: A Commentary*, trans. David M. G. Stalker (London: SCM Press, 1969) 405. If this interpretation is correct then it would suggest that the destruction of the whole nation is necessary to make up for the acts of those who are eating with Gad and Meni which may be in accord with the idea that the 'evil' of the crime of the Rebellious Son can bring destruction on the whole nation and thus must be purged from their midst.

[876] Jessie DeGrado states: 'more archaic English terms (such as "harlot") often obscure the obscenity of the Hebrew text and, in many cases, renders sexual violence against women more palatable.' 'The *qdesha* in Hosea 4:14: Putting the (Myth of the) Sacred Prostitute to Bed', *Vetus Testamentum* 68 (2018), 10, n.5.

> Yahweh, in order that the fierce anger of Yahweh may turn away from Israel.' And Moses said to the judges of Israel, 'Each of you shall kill any of your people who have yoked themselves to Ba'al Peor.'

Before the text describes the sacrifices and commensal consumption of food with Moabite women, the root זנה (whore) is utilised (25:1), a biblical term frequently associated with the worship of other gods. Here, however, it also serves as a likely derogatory reference to the Israelites' sexual relations with Moabites which leads to the worship of non-Yahwistic deities. Cultic prostitution, which was likely not a phenomenon in ancient southwest Asia, is certainly not the meaning in Num 25:1.[877] It has been suggested that the Israelites were reaffirming social bonds with kin through intermarriage:

> These Israelites are engaged in…reinforcing a bond already in existence, the kind of bond referred to elsewhere as 'a covenant of kinship' (*berit 'ahim*, Amos 1:9). An exchange of women or, in other words, intermarriage, is the most prominent feature of this type of contractual social bonding, and tradition requires that it be sealed by sharing in sacrifice and a sacrificial meal of the kind referred to in vv. 1-5.[878]

If intermarrying is in view in this text, then King Solomon in 1 Kgs 11:1-6 is guilty of a similar crime.[879] Regardless of whether intermarrying or just intercourse is meant, sacrifices are offered to Baal Peor, another deity.[880] Yahweh becomes

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[877] For a very recent and insightful discussion on cultic prostitution see DeGrado 'The *qdesha* in Hosea 4:14'. Earlier studies which DeGrado critiques are Mayer I. Gruber, 'Hebrew *qedesah* and her Canaanite and Akkadian Cognates', *Ugarit-Forschungen* 18 (1986), 133-148; Joan Goodnick Westenholz, 'Tamar, *qĕdēšā*, *qadištu*, and sacred prostitution in Mesopotamia', *Harvard Theological Review* 82 (1989), 245-266. See also Levine, *Numbers 21-36*, 295-6. On this issue in ancient southwest Asia more broadly see Stephanie Lynn Budin, *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 14-47.

[878] Joseph Blenkinsopp, 'The Baal Peor Episode Revisited (Num 25, 1-18)' *Biblica* (2012), 86-97, 90.

[879] Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 21-36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 283, 295.

[880] It is possible that the deity alluded to here was the national god of Moab, Kemosh (Num 21:29), and the reference to Ba'al Peor is a geographic term, perhaps abbreviated from the original Beth Ba'al Peor as in the case of Beth Ba'al Me'on. Or, perhaps more likely, the name does not refer to the name of the deity Ba'al but instead a title, 'the Master of Peor', of a local deity. In that case then, just as the Israelites could identify Yahweh with surrounding Ba'al cults, so too could the Moabites have identified Kemosh with cults such as that of Ba'al Peor. As Ba'al Peor is also mentioned in Hos 9:10 and Psalm 106:28-29, it may be that they have inspired the telling in Num 25:1-5 or have come from contemporary milieus. See George Buchanan Gray,

incensed; by sharing in ritual consumption the Israelites have not only socialised with foreign women, but also a foreign god. Yahweh is calmed when the bodies of the consumers are impaled (see discussion below), as they act as a corrective to the social disorder created by commensality with other gods. Social engagement with deities that are not Yahweh leads to Israel's relationship with Yahweh becoming anti-social. The scribes of such texts clearly do not view such worship as acceptable in their Yahwistic framework and thus, while polytheism was likely normative at one point in time, it is portrayed as deviating from what was perceived to be socially and ritually acceptable.

This behaviour is also explicitly deemed to be deviant in Exod 34:14-16:[881]

> You shall tear down their altars, break their standing stones (מצבתם), and cut down their asherahs (אשריו). For you shall worship no other god, because Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous god. You shall not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, for when they go whoring with (וזנו) their gods and sacrifice to their gods, someone among them will invite you, and you will eat of the sacrifice. And you will take wives from among their daughters for your sons, and their daughters who go whore with (וזנו) their gods will make your sons also go whore with (והזנו) their gods. (Exod 34:13-16)

This text looks forward knowingly; the consumption of food will be the crossing of the Rubicon for the Israelites as it leads to the inevitable worship of other deities. The commensality that shared meals between human worshippers and divine beings creates is an enticing and ensnaring phenomenon (cf. Prov 9:13-17). The consumption entails sociality and the forming of an interdependent social network of sacrifice, reciprocity and nourishment. The bonds of reciprocity between the daughters of the land and the sons of the Israelites formed by means of shared participation in eating sacrifices to their deities is presented as the 'gateway' to further idolatry. Yahweh's jealousy determines his exclusive role in the social network; other deities cannot co-exist in a network with him. The materiality of the objects which express and facilitate the worship

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Numbers (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1903), 382-3; Philip J. Budd, *Numbers* (Waco: Word Books, 1984), 276-7; Levine, *Numbers, 279,* 284, 294.

[881] Dennis T. Olson, *Numbers* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1996), 154; Budd, *Numbers,* 276.

of other deities (altars, standing stones and asherahs) must also be decimated so that they do not have power in the social network of which Yahweh is to be the sole legitimate divine being (v.14).

As in the law of the Rebellious Son, the punishment for the crime is execution. Moses' command to the judges of the people of Israel to kill anybody who yoked themselves to Baal Peor appears to be an expiatory act - specifically expiatory of Yahweh's wrath.[882] Adriane Leveen highlights the public aspect of this narrative by taking the phrase 'facing the sun' as indicative of the modern English expression 'in broad daylight'.[883] The purpose of this public punishment is to bolster the power of both Yahweh and Moses while 'thoroughly extinguishing the dangerous breach' of those who worshipped with the Moabite women.[884] In the same way that Francesca Stavrakopoulou views the broken-necked heifer as ritually 'exhibited' to turn away the dangerous agency of the abandoned corpse in Deut 21:1-9, she may also view these dead human bodies as ritually 'exhibited' by Moses, in order that the wrath of Yahweh may turn away.[885] The dead have ritual agency which can affect the living negatively or positively. It is the judgement of Yahweh and Moses, and the public execution, in Num 25:1-5 which bear similarity with the law of the Rebellious Son. Acts of consumption deemed socially and ritually inappropriate, ('deviant'), must be punished with death in order that the 'evil', which could lead to Yahweh's destruction of Israel, can be removed from the group as a whole.

Passages in which Israel consumes the sacrifices of other deities or shares a cultic meal with other gods display an attitude not dissimilar to that of Deut 21:18-21. This behaviour is considered contrary to Yahweh's law and opposed to what pleases, triggering his anger. The anti-sociality of Israel dissolves the social network; Yahweh, as a jealous god, cannot be connected in a social network with rival deities and therefore he must take destructive action. In the law of the Rebellious Son it is the elders of the community who act as judge on behalf of Yahweh; they are his agents of judgement and destruction. In the passages above, however, Yahweh himself exhibits his wrath and judgement

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[882] Levine, *Numbers 21-36*, 302.
[883] Adriane Leveen, *Memory and Tradition in the Book of Numbers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 149.
[884] Leveen, *Memory and Tradition,* 149.
[885] Francesca Stavrakopoulou, *The Social Life of the Corpse – Within and Without the Bible* (forthcoming).

on those who have worshiped other deities by sharing food and drink with them. The judgement is followed by execution, in the case of Isa 65:11-12 the punishment is declared by Yahweh and is described as a 'slaughter' by means of a 'sword'. In Num 25:1-5 the execution is carried out by Moses and other leaders of the community, comparable to the stoning of the Rebellious Son, but it is commanded by Yahweh. Dining with Gad and Meni is described as 'evil' and there is a sense of purging the community of Yahweh's wrath in Num 25:1-5 much like the purging of 'evil' from the midst of Israel in Deut 21:21. The crime of the Rebellious Son already has more in common with consumption acts that were regarded as socially and ritually incompatible with a social relationship with Yahweh, rather than those which simply involved excessive quantities of food and drink.

6.2.2 'Deviant' Consumption associated with Mortuary Rites

It is well known from archaeological remains of mortuary sites that consumption activities were a common feature of the care of the dead during and after burial in ancient Israel and Judah.[886] While archaeological remains can tell us about burial they cannot tell us much about the ritual aspects of death either at the point of burial or subsequent ritual acts in association with the deceased. Instead it is texts which might provide more substantial information about the way in which mortuary rites were perceived by those who wrote them:[887]

> I held out my hands all day long
> to a rebellious (סורר) people,
> who walk in a way (דרך) that is not good (טוב),
> following their own thoughts;
> a people who provoke me
> to my face continually,
> sacrificing in gardens (בגנות)

[886] Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 72-82, 103-8.
[887] Theodore J. Lewis, 'How Far Can Texts Take Us? Evaluating Textual Sources for Reconstructing Ancient Israelite Beliefs about the Dead' in Barry M. Gittlen, ed. *Sacred Time, Sacred Place: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 174, 175-76; Saul M. Olyan, *Biblical Mourning: Ritual and Social Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 29.

and offering incense on bricks;
who sit inside tombs (בקברים),
and spend the night (ילינו) in hidden places (ובנצורים);
who eat swine's flesh,
with broth[888] of unclean meat (פגלים) in their pots;[889]
who say, "Keep to yourself,
do not come near me, for I am too holy (קדשׁתיך) for you."
(Isa 65:2-5)

One is immediately struck by the description of the people as 'rebellious' (סורר), the same vocabulary used of the son in Deut 21:18-21. In addition, the text claims the people 'walk in a way that is not good', which is perhaps indicative of two points. First, the concept of 'walking in the way' is frequently idiomatic for following Yahweh's laws, and thus implies that the people are not adhering to divine law.[890] Second, 'not good' implies that their way is the opposite of good, which in Hebrew is רע, evil. In fact, Joseph Blenkinsopp translates the line 'who go in their evil way'.[891] Therefore the general tone is evocative of the law of the Rebellious Son. The activities of these people are then laid out.

The sacrifices that are said to take place in tombs (v.4) are considered an essential part of the preparation for incubation rites.[892] In addition, the food items consumed in v. 5 are thought to be associated with underworld entities (discussed below). Thus, this text includes several features which point towards the performance of incubation rituals.[893] In Isa 65:4 the verb לין could specifically mean 'spending the night for a purpose of securing a divine

[888] Reading מרק with 1QIsa[a], LXX, Tg., Vulg.
[889] Reading בכליהם, with lQIsa[a], Tg., Vulg.
[890] Gen 6:12; 18:19; Jer 5:4; Deut 9:16; Ps 18:22; 25:4; 1 Kgs 2:3. See also Douglas Knight, *Law, Power and Justice in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 89.
[891] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66,* 266.
[892] On the dead and incubation rites see Theodore J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 159-160. On sacrifice as 'an essential element' of incubation rituals see Diana Lipton, *Revisions of the Night: Politics and Promises in the Patriarchal Dreams of Genesis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 11, 12, 20, 22, 188-9. On mortuary gardens see Francesca Stavrakopoulou, 'Exploring the Garden of Uzza: Death, Burial and Ideologies of Kingship', *Biblica* 87 (2006), 9-10.
[893] See Jean Marie Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World*, trans. Jill M. Munro (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 21; Ann Jeffers, 'Divination by Dreams in Ugaritic Literature and in the Old Testament', *Irish Biblical Studies* 12 (1990), 175-83.

revelation'.[894] These activities suggest an on-going social relationship with the divine dead.[895]

Commentators often associate Isa 66:17 with 65:3-5 on account of its topic and location:[896] 'Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens (הגנות), following the one in the centre, eating the flesh of pigs, unclean stuff (והשׁקץ), and rodents, shall come to an end together – an oracle of Yahweh.' In both this text and Isa 65:4 the consumption of pig flesh and food which is deemed to be unclean (פגלים or שׁקץ) is eaten. As a sacrificial meat which is more than two days old, פגלים is not to be eaten (according to Lev 7:18, and Lev 19:7), while שׁקץ refers to species of animal deemed unclean for consumption according to Lev 11:10-13; 20, 23, 41-2. (cf. Ezek 8:10). While swine flesh is here presented as unsuitable for consumption, the Hebrew root used to refer to its unclean status is טמא (Lev 11:7), so while there is an apparent difference it is yet difficult to see the exact distinction between this and שׁקץ, especially when one compares Hos 9:3b which states 'in Assyria they shall eat unclean (טמא) food'. Perhaps פגלים is deemed unclean because it has been dead for too long and thus blurs the line between life and death. This may be the very reason it is associated with rites involving the dead, but this is just a speculation. פגלים is mentioned in a cognate form, *pglt*, in the Ugaritic *Ba'al Cycle* (1.4 III 15-17): 'Unclean meat (*pglt*) was placed on my table. Vileness in my cup, I drank. Indeed two sacrifices Ba'al hates.'[897] Ba'al is served with this repulsive food as an act of offence towards him; it certainly is not befitting a deity by the standard of the Ugaritic scribes. In both the Hebrew Bible and the Baal Cycle, פגלים was evidently associated with extreme repulsion. All the food items mentioned in Isa 65:4 and 66:17 appear to be regarded as cultically abhorrent by the scribes of these texts; they are anti-social in relation to Yahweh.

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[894] Greek versions include 'for the purpose of dreams' (δι' ἐνύπνια) in v. 4. See also Lipton, *Revisions of the Night*, 78, n.30 where she cites André Caquot, 'Le Psaume XCI' *Semitica* 8 (1958), 21-37.

[895] אלהים is used in Ugaritic texts to refer to the divine dead and in 1 Sam 28:13 to describe the figure of the deceased Samuel brought up by the woman of Endor. See Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 49-51, 154.

[896] Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster Press, 2001), 541; Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 422; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66,* 311; Goldingay, *Isaiah 56-66,* 505-6; and see Stavrakopoulou, 'Exploring the Garden', 12 and the works cited there.

[897] Translation my own.

This seems especially true of the pig flesh consumed by the people referred to in these passages. Given its appearance in incantations in Mesopotamian and Hittite religion, and its chthonic associations in ancient Egyptian and Greek cults, Roland de Vaux famously argued that the pork was used in 'secret' cults cross-culturally.[898] He points out that the pig was regarded as simultaneously sacred and impure, in that it is likely *because* the pig was used sacredly in cultic settings associated with the underworld that it then became considered impure and banned as a food item.[899] Pig remains have been found in ancient Syrian contexts and have been related to Hittite rituals in which pigs are sacrificed to underworld entities.[900]

Isa 66:3 may be a description of so-called 'syncretistic' groups, in that people who offer grain and burn incense - Yahwistically acceptable rituals - are also offering pigs' blood and blessing idols.[901] The rituals in this text may be rituals of reconciliation where the pigs are a substitute for a human or have fertility associations.[902] The social network is disrupted for Yahweh by the introduction of practices that invoke the agency and legitimacy of other divine beings. Isa 66:3 says these people 'have chosen their own ways' which harks back to the rebellious people of Isa 65:2 who walk in 'a way that is not good'. We may even think of this 'way' as being the very social network in which they are socialising: 'they act in their own networks with other gods and other foods'.

The consumption activities of this 'syncretistic' group are portrayed as absolutely contrary to biblical law; they eat the flesh of pigs and three day old meat which are both deemed unfitting in Yahweh's social network. While pork consumption is associated with divine beings of the underworld or the deceased more generally (see above), one can only speculate about a similar association for unclean sacrificial meat. Thus, castigating the contents of their vessels as

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[898] Roland de Vaux, 'Le sacrifice des porcs en Palestine et dans l'Ancien Orient' in *Bible et Orient,* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967), 261. See also Walter Houston, *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 165.
[899] De Vaux, 'Le sacrifice des porcs', 262-3.
[900] Billie Jean Collins, 'A Channel to the Underworld in Syria', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67 (2004), 54-56. And see Billie Jean Collins, 'Pigs at the Gate: Hittite Pig Sacrifice in its Eastern Mediterranean Context', *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 6 (2006), 175-6.
[901] De Vaux, 'Le sacrifice des porcs', 263-4.
[902] Collins, 'Pigs at the Gate', 182; Billie Jean Collins, 'Necromancy, Fertility and the Dark Earth: The Use of Ritual Pits in Hittite Cult' in Paul Allan Mirecki and Marvin W. Meyer, eds*. Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 237-8.

something cultically abhorrent may have been used as a rhetorical device meant to convey the repulsive nature of their rituals from a Yahwistic standpoint. Overall it is apparent that consumption activities are significant in these Isaian polemics against activities associated with rituals in mortuary contexts. This may be because, as noted above, the consumption of food between human and deceased divine participants creates social networks with the dead or divinities associated with the dead. Being a jealous god, Yahweh cannot co-exist in a network with these underworld entities.

The text of Isa 65:2-5 appears to reflect some of the ways in which consumption indexes sociality. A sacrifice to the divine, that is then shared, harnesses the role of the dead in a social network with the living. Responding with an oracle or visit is the dead's reciprocation of this sociality. The receipt of communication in a vivid form manifests the agency of all participants including the food that creates engagement between the living and the dead. Yahweh is, however, excluded from this engagement. Indeed, Yahweh exclaims that he has held out his hands all day long to Israel (v.2), he has offered sociality but it has not been reciprocated, and instead his people have communed with other beings in the night. The participants themselves reject sociality with others, adjuring them to stay away because of their holy status (v.5).

Execution is judged to be the necessary response to these people by Yahweh. Isa 65:2-5 precedes the text concerning the worship of Gad and Meni discussed above, and thus the fate of the 'sword' and the 'slaughter' is also the fate of those eating pig flesh in mortuary gardens. Indeed, Blenkinsopp sees a similar end for those described in Isa 66:17 specifically, and extends this punishment out also to those of Isa 65:1-7: 'For with fire Yahweh enters into judgement, and with his sword on all humanity; those slain by Yahweh will be many' (Isa 66:16).[903]

Mourning rites are also associated with acts of consumption as the following text from Jeremiah demonstrates:

> Thus says Yahweh: Do not enter the *bet marzeaḥ*, or go to lament, or bemoan them; for I have taken away my peace from this people, says Yahweh, my steadfast love and compassion.

[903] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66,* 311.

> [6]Both elite and lowly shall die in this land; they shall not be buried, and no one shall lament for them; there shall be no ritual cutting, no shaving of the head for them. [7] No one shall break bread for the mourner, to offer comfort (לנחמו) for the dead; nor shall anyone give them the cup of comforting (תנחומים) to drink for their fathers or their mothers. [8] You shall not go into the house of feasting to sit with them, to eat and drink. (Jer 16:5-8)

The *marzeaḥ* in this text is presented as a cultic institution associated with mourning practices.[904] It is often assumed that the mourning rites listed here are illicit and non-compatible within a Yahwistic context.[905] While rites such as ritual cutting and shaving are condemned in so-called priestly texts (such as Lev 21:5; 19:27-8; Deut 14:1), they were likely widespread Israelite and Judahite practices.[906]

Breaking bread for the mourner and offering the cup of consolation (v.7) are mourning rites which imply the solidarity of the community which comes together in the event of a death. Gary Anderson sees the root 'to comfort' (נחם) as having a specific ritual function in mourning contexts.[907] Close friends would ritually self-identify with the mourners by carrying out the same mourning rites. Shared consumption of 'mourning bread' and the 'cup of comforting' then create a shared identity between the mourners and those supporting them emotionally and ritually. The end of these practices would thus entail the end of comfort and commensality created in times of mourning.

As discussed in a previous chapter, Deut 26:12-14 describes a statement that is said by a worshipper after having given his sacred tithed food to the temple. V.

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[904] Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*, 37; Christopher B. Hays, *A Covenant with Death: Death in the Iron Age II and Its Rhetorical Uses in Proto-Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 163-4.
[905] For example, Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1986), 339. This so-called 'oblivion', however, is assumed, and not at all explicit in the text. See also Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20 A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Doubleday, 1999), 761.
[906] Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*, 111-2; Brian Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 168–70. For commentaries see William McKane, *A Critical Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah,* Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 367. See also Leslie C. Allen, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 189-90; William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1-25* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 471. Holladay, however, does indicate the possibility that the prohibition implies the non-participation in 'any customs, whether licit or illicit'.
[907] Gary Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance: The Expression of Grief an Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 84.

14 iterates that he has not taken any of it for himself, even in specific circumstances in which he may have been in need: 'I have not eaten of [the sacred tithed food] while in mourning; I have not removed any of it while I was unclean; and I have not offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed Yahweh my God, doing just as you commanded me.' The third circumstance cited refers to the offering of food to the dead which implies that other food offerings were the norm, the tithed food, however, was not acceptable as it was intended for Yahweh.[908] Such an idea is well established.[909] It is evident that despite the prohibitions concerning food offerings to the dead, their practice was ongoing at least until late texts such as Tobit (4:17).

Matthew J. Suriano sees a parallel situation between Deut 26:14 and Hos 9:4.[910] Both situations concern the feeding of the dead in association with mourning, his translation reads:

> They shall not pour drink offerings of wine to Yahweh, and their sacrifices shall not please him. Theirs is like bread of mourning, all who eat of it make themselves impure because their bread is for their defunct-soul—it shall not come to the house of Yahweh.[911]

Consumption of the mourning bread, is considered here to make its consumers unclean (טמא) which is not dissimilar to the unclean foods mentioned in Isa 65:4 and 66:17 discussed above. The issue in both texts, according to Suriano, is that the mourning rites, including feeding the dead, were defiling and thus created separation from Yahweh as one could not participate in Yahwistic cultic life while in a defiled state.[912] Thus, feeding the dead held an ambiguous position; it was a part of ancient Israelite and Judahite custom, but it created constraints on one's social relationship with Yahweh. Yahweh could not be socialised with the dead or any living person who was socialising with the dead.

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[908] Not as a sacrifice per se but the ideology behind the tithing was that it 'belonged' to Yahweh.
[909] Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*, 45; Theodore J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead* 103; Karel Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria & Israel: Continuity & Change in the Forms of Religious Life (*Leiden: Brill, 1996), 209*;* Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 10.
[910] Matthew J. Suriano, 'Breaking Bread with the Dead: Katumuwa's Stele, Hosea 9:4, and the Early History of the Soul', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 134 (2014), 398-9.
[911] Suriano, 'Breaking Bread with the Dead', 396.
[912] Suriano, 'Breaking Bread with the Dead', 404.

Psalm 106:28-29 connects the Ba'al Peor incident discussed above with mortuary rites: 'Then they attached themselves to Ba'al Peor, and ate sacrifices offered to the dead; they provoked Yahweh to anger with their deeds, and a plague broke out among them.' This short passage is demonstrative of the opinion of the scribes that sacrificing to the dead, just like the worship of other gods, will be judged by Yahweh and deemed to be deserving of death. But as feeding the dead appears to be acceptable, there perhaps is a small distinction which marks the line between acts of mourning and the care, feeding and commemoration of the dead versus the veneration or worship of the dead:[913] the former is acceptable but defiling in biblical texts, while the latter is wholly 'deviant' in biblical texts. Ps 16:3-5 is also an ambiguous text in relation to the dead as it appears to disavow both offerings to the dead and their commemoration: 'As for the holy ones who are in the underworld, the mighty ones […][914] I shall not bring their libations of blood, nor take their names on my lips. Yahweh is my allotted portion and my cup, you hold my lot.' Van der Toorn suggests that the references to the 'portion' and 'cup' index meat and wine, thus the 'libations of blood' are pejorative of 'rites of communion with the dead by means of mutual ingestion'.[915] It is evident that the speaker is asserting his desire for sociality with Yahweh over sociality with the dead. The dead are not viewed as social agents in this text, but Yahweh does have agency in human life as he holds their fate, or 'lot', in his hands. The dead are separated from Yahweh and the speaker does not want separation from Yahweh also.

The subsequent text to Jer 16:5-8 is clearly prohibitive in tone as it turns to the issue of the worship of אלהים. It may be significant, given the mortuary context and mention of the dead in vv.5-8, that אלהים is used in Ugaritic texts to refer to the dead, and in 1 Sam 28:13 when Saul asks the woman of Endor to consult the deceased Samuel.[916] The text following Jer 16:5-8 reads:

> [9] For thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel: I am going to banish from this place, in your days and before your eyes, the

[913] A distinction also made by Brian Schmidt see Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 5-13.
[914] Text too corrupt for translation here.
[915] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 210.
[916] Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 49-51, 154.

> voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.[10] And when you tell this people all these words, and they say to you, “Why has Yahweh pronounced all this great evil against us? What is our iniquity? What is the sin that we have committed against Yahweh our God?” [11] then you shall say to them: It is because your ancestors have forsaken me, says Yahweh, and have gone after other gods/the dead (אלהים) and have served and bowed down to them, and have forsaken me and have not kept my law. [12] You have done more evil (הרעתם) than your ancestors, for here you are, each man walking according to the stubbornness (שׁררות) of his evil (הרע) heart, without listening (שׁמע) to me. [13] Therefore I will hurl you out of this land, into a land/underworld (הארץ) that neither you nor your ancestors have known, and there you shall serve other gods/the dead (אלהים) day and night, for I will show you no favour. (Jer 16:9-13)

The passage continues from the command not to eat and drink (v.8) to announcing the removal of joy from among the people, which even includes the joy of the taking of a woman.[917] The reason for this punishment is explained as being a consequence of the worship of other אלהים which may well be inclusive of both deities and the divine dead. Serving other divine beings likely implies food offerings. Yahweh judges this to be unacceptable; Israel can participate in his social network, or the other gods’ (v.13), but not both. Several features of the crime of the Rebellious Son are present: the people do not follow Yahweh’s law; their hearts, in the text, are in a construct form with רע; and it states that the people do not listen to Yahweh. There is also a strong similarity between the root שׁרר, found in in Jer 16:12, being synonymous with ‘stubbornness’, and the root סרר found in Deut 21:18.

Yahweh’s punishment, apparently in addition to the removal of joy, is to displace the people from the land they know to a land they do not. It is possible that a play on words may also be intended here, in that ארץ can refer to Sheol,

[917] Jeremiah is commanded not to take a woman earlier in the chapter (v. 2), so this is likely a related statement.

the place of the dead.[918] Yahweh's abandonment of his people, whether in Sheol or not, in combination with the mass destruction described in v. 4 where the corpses of the people will be eaten by animals and left as dung on the ground, again assumes that the appropriate response to the consumption activities described, is execution. The people have eaten with other deities and the dead and consequently the people will be eaten themselves.

Overall, mortuary rites appear to be as offensive to the biblical scribes as the worship of other gods: all food comes from Yahweh and thus food should be returned to him rather than to the dead. Yahweh thus cannot be in a reciprocal relationship with humans who interact with such beings. The assumed anti-sociality of worshipping other divine beings, whether gods or the dead, is turned back around onto the Israelites who are thus abandoned themselves by Yahweh. The consumption activities are thus a threat to the wellbeing of the people and thus must be halted by executing the participants. Such an overall attitude, in which consumption is indicative, or a necessary part, of wider 'deviant' rites and practices associated with the dead, may be also at play in the judgement and execution of the Rebellious Son.

6.2.3 'Deviant' Consumption in Yahweh's Cult

Thus far, I have explored episodes of consumption considered deviant because they are perceived to be non-Yahwistic in that the command not to worship other deities is ignored. Effectively, acts of shared consumption with other deities or the divine dead make Yahweh jealous as they disrupt the sociality between him and Israel. Yahweh cannot abide competition with other deities or divine beings. By eating in connection with other deities or the divine dead, Yahweh is in competition with them as his position as the only legitimate god is threatened. There are, however, two instances of consumption which do not involve 'external' deities and instead are very much contextualised within the cult of Yahweh itself. The Yahwistic context is particularly apparent as both stories focus on priests of Yahweh: Hophni and Phineas, sons of the high priest

[918] Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 43-4. See Exod 15:12; Jer 17:13; Jonah 2:7; Ps 22:30; Ps 71:2. So, *HALOT*, s.v. אֶרֶץ no. 5, 91.

Eli at the shrine in Shiloh, and Nadab and Abihu, sons of the high priest Aaron, in the tent of meeting.

The sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, are presented as engaging in 'deviant' acts of consumption because they do not treat Yahweh's sacrifices appropriately. The meat offering in the tabernacle is a highly ritualised food item, and as highly ritualised food there are very specific and technical foodways with which it is associated. To disregard the prescribed customs required of such a ritualised food item is to treat the food inappropriately both socially and religiously, and thus is 'deviant':

> Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they did not know Yahweh**13** or the duties of the priests to the people. When anyone offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, **14** and he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or cauldron, or pot; all that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the one who was sacrificing, 'Give meat for the priest to roast; for he will not accept boiled meat from you, but only raw.' **16** And if the man said to him, 'Let them burn the fat first, and then take whatever you wish,' he would say, 'No, you must give it now; if not, I will take it by force.' **17** Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of Yahweh; for they treated the offerings of Yahweh abhorrently. (1 Sam 2:12-17)

The two priestly sons ignore the laws that allocate certain parts of a sacrificial animal for priestly consumption. Yahweh, the priests, and the offerer are meant to have specific prescribed portions of the meat, but instead the priests at Shiloh take any of the meat that comes out of the pot on the pronged fork. In addition, the fat, which is the best part of the animal and is reserved for burning on the altar for Yahweh alone, is also eaten by the two sons and thus is denied to Yahweh. The division and consumption of certain parts of an animal by different participants creates and endorses hierarchical identities and social relationships between different members of the social network: 'The different participants in the meal do share the same animal, but they receive very

different portions, and in this difference there seems to be a message about the fundamental ontological difference between god and man.'[919] By refusing to allocate the best, fatty portions to Yahweh, Hophni and Phineas disrupt the social ordering of sacrifice because they prevent the food portions from inculcating and maintaining specific identities and roles of the participants of the network.[920] Instead, the sons consume the best portions, the fatty tissue, and even when the offerer complains about the way in which his sacrificial meat should be apportioned they refuse. Yahweh sends a messenger to Eli who says: 'Why do you kick at my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded, and honour your sons more than me by nourishing (להבריאכם) yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?' (1 Sam 2:29). In eating the food that is meant for Yahweh, the sons gain the identity, position and honour that that particular choice portion of food inculcates and communicates to the rest of the social network. The food is nourishing - physically and socially. As a result, Yahweh seeks to eliminate the cause of the disruption to the network in order to elevate himself back to the position from which he was dislocated.

The sacrifice is rendered incapable of performing the socio-religious role intended. It does not acknowledge Yahweh's elevated status and thus cannot in any way be used to elicit action from Yahweh, whether for the removal of sin or otherwise. This idea is perhaps underlying Eli's statements to his sons:

> Now Eli was very old. He heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting.[921] **23** He said to them, 'Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil (רעים) dealings from all these people. **24** No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear, you cause the people of Yahweh to sin. **25** If one person sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if someone sins against Yahweh, who can mediate?' But they would not listen

[919] Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme, '"If I were hungry, I would not tell you" (Ps 50, 12): Perspectives on the Care and Feeding of the Gods in the Hebrew Bible', *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 28 (2014), 178.
[920] *Contra* Burnside who suggests their crime is filling their stomachs and indulging excessively, despite there being no evidence of this in the text. *Signs of Sin*, 55-7.
[921] Note the occurrence of deviant eating and sexual interactions with women as in the Baal Peor incident discussed above.

(יִשְׁמְעוּ) to the voice of their father; for it was the desire of Yahweh to put them to death. (1 Sam 2:22-25)

This passage exhibits several features also attested in the law of the Rebellious Son. First, the actions of the two sons are described as 'evil' (רעים) indicating that this food abuse is considered as serious an offence as the crime of the Rebellious Son. Second, Hophni and Phineas, like the Rebellious Son, do not listen to the voice of their father. Third, Yahweh's response to the mistreatment of his sacrifices, which effectively encapsulates mistreatment of him, is the divinely ordered execution of the sons in 2 Sam 4:11. In the same way that Yahweh's elimination of Hophni and Phineas 'resets' the social network to its proper configuration, we may think of the community's stoning of the Rebellious Son as also 'resetting' the social network of Israel and Yahweh (Deut 21:21).

While the consumption of Hophni and Phineas is explicitly problematic in the text of 1 Samuel 2, the consumption of Nadab and Abihu is decidedly opaque:

> Now Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, each took his censer, put fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered strange fire before Yahweh, such as he had not commanded them. **2** And fire came out from before (מלפני) Yahweh and consumed them, and they died before Yahweh. **3** Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what Yahweh meant when he said,
>
> 'Through those who are near me
> I will be holy (אקדש),
> and before all the people
> I will be glorified.'
>
> And Aaron was silent. (Lev 10:1-3)

> And Yahweh spoke to Aaron: **9** Drink no wine or beer, neither you nor your sons, when you enter the tent of meeting that you may not die; it is a statute forever throughout your generations. **10** You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; **11** and you are to teach the

> people of Israel all the statutes that Yahweh has spoken to them through Moses. (Lev 10:8-11)

Scholars have been unable to decide what Nadab and Abihu specifically did wrong to warrant their fiery consumption by Yahweh.[922] The explanation provided by Moses appears to be no explanation at all, and thus the reader is left pondering what led Yahweh to end the lives of his priests who wanted to offer him incense. The first words Yahweh speaks after the death of Aaron's sons are instructions for priests not to drink wine or beer in the tent of meeting or else they will be killed. Was this the mistake Nadab and Abihu made?

One possible interpretation is that the text is intentionally ambiguous in order to demonstrate the potential danger of approaching the presence of Yahweh.[923] Given the wealth of laws provided 'earlier' in the narrative, the implication is that even an expert who has 'mastered' this legislation is still at risk of making an error. And, in addition, the text does not want those who have such a knowledge of the Levitical rulings to believe that they are able to 'control' Yahweh as they wish: 'Our text, which hitherto has been so deeply invested in the kataphatic process of revelation, recoils in worry that the reader who has mastered the many details of Levitical law may believe that he or she has acquired the formula for conjuring the divine presence.'[924] Anderson's suggestion is an interesting one in the context of our discussion about how other deities are communed with in the passages dealt with above.

The sharing of food and/or drink with gods or the deceased is usually an attempt to elicit a response from them, this could be a specific response such as a vision or oracle, or a general wish for positive fates and fortunes (as suggested by the reference to Gad and Meni). In earlier chapters I discussed the likelihood that alcohol, as a mind-altering substance believed to be created

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[922] For an array of differing opinions see John C. Laughlin, 'The "Strange Fire" of Nadab and Abihu', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95 (1976), 559-65; Robert Kirschner, 'The Rabbinic and Philonic Exegesis of the Nadab and Abihu Incident (Lev. 10:1-6)', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 73 (1983), 375-93; Edward L. Greenstein, 'Deconstruction and Biblical Narrative', *Prooftexts* 9 (1989), 43-71; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation and Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1991), 633-35; Richard S. Hess, 'Leviticus 10:1: Strange Fire and an Odd Name', *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 12 (2002), 187-198; Bryan D. Bibb, 'Nadab And Abihu Attempt To Fill A Gap: Law And Narrative In Leviticus 10.1-7', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 96 (2001), 83-99.

[923] Gary Anderson, '"Through Those Who Are Near to Me, I Will Show Myself Holy": Nadab and Abihu and Apophatic Theology', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 77 (2015), 17.

[924] Anderson, '"Through Those Who Are Near to Me"', 18.

though some kind of magical transformation, was used not only as a social lubricant between humans, but also between the human and the divine realms. A substance transformed by the divine provides access to the divine when it is consumed and embodied. Could it be possible that Nadab and Abihu, in their desire to draw near to Yahweh and offer him incense – an offering known in other texts to be regarded as a pleasurable, sweet-smelling experience for Yahweh – also hoped that through inebriation they would be able to communicate with the divine presence? The irony of this situation would be that the divine presence was indeed elicited, in the form of a fiery blast that burned them to death, perhaps for the very reason Anderson proposes. Forcing Yahweh to react in response to the sons' incense and altered state of mind disrupts the social network because it challenges Yahweh's agency. Nadab and Abihu, if they were indeed trying to gain contact with Yahweh in this way, attempt to empower themselves over him using ritual actions intended to effect his manifestation, which in a way it did.

Yahweh is not under the control of humans. He cannot be summoned and placated at will by completing a step by step process as though he were a tried and tested cake recipe. Yahweh cannot be conjured like the divine dead after an incubation ritual. As with all the suggestions put forward about the nature of Nadab and Abihu's error, this proposal is admittedly speculative. After all, Yahweh remains elusive and mysterious to the scribes of these texts. But if alcohol consumption is a negative factor in the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, then perhaps the use of alcohol to elicit a divine response is a possible factor in the crime of the Rebellious Son. In comparison with the passages discussed above, however, such as those condemning the worship of other gods, mortuary rites and the behaviour of Hophni and Phineas, the possible inebriation of Aaron's sons seems the least persuasive example for comparison with the crime in Deut 21:18-21.

So-called deviant consumption has thus been characterised as acts of consumption in which Israel, or certain groups within Israel, 'socialise' through shared commensality, in a way that undermines Yahweh's position as the sole legitimate deity. Sacrificing to, or sharing in cultic meals with, other gods is incompatible in a social network in which Yahweh also interacts. Sociality with other deities surmounts to anti-sociality with Yahweh. Similarly, the dead from

whom people may try to elicit visions or oracles, are equally problematic as consumptive partners in a Yahwistic ideology. Yahweh's identity and role is created and maintained through the food in his cult. So, if the appropriate use of food is disrupted, as in the case at Shiloh, Yahweh again must rectify the situation. All of these cases require Yahweh to judge and execute the perpetrators of any consumption which signifies their sociality with deities that are not Yahweh. Therefore, the crime of the Rebellious Son was more likely to be consumption involving other deities, the divine dead, or the abuse of food in Yahweh's cult, than excessive consumption. This 'deviant' consumption departs from what it meant, for the scribes of these texts, to live appropriately in a way that did not threaten the stability of the socio-religious network of which they too were a part.

6.3 Episodes of Consumption that utilise זולל and סבא

Having surveyed passages describing 'deviant' consumption, which are likely examples of the kinds of crimes implied in the accusation of being a זולל and סבא, this section will now turn to deal with the biblical Hebrew roots זלל and סבא themselves. Both terms are very rare in the Hebrew Bible: זלל occurs only 8 times, 2 of which are in Niphal and have an unrelated meaning of 'to quake' (Isa 64:1, 3).[925] סבא occurs nine times but two occurrences have an alternative meaning, Nah 1:10 (x2) referring to 'bindweeds'.[926] The remaining occurrences, however, allow us to glean the possible meanings or connotations that these lexemes held for the scribes by examining the surrounding literary contexts for each. Before addressing the occurrence of זלל and סבא as a pair in Proverbs 23:19-21, I will examine occurrences where these words do not appear together, beginning with סבא.

[925] *HALOT*, s.v. זלל II, 272.
[926] *HALOT*, s.v. סָבָא 738.

6.3.1 סבא in Hos 4:16-19, Isa 1:21-23a, Isa 56:12 and Ezek 23:42

In Hosea 4, a series of prophecies occur; each is directed at a priesthood accused of deviant worship or illegitimate teaching.[927] Due to the use of סרר and סבא in both Hos 4:16-19 and Deut 21:18-21, commentators have noted a connection between these texts, perhaps as an 'echoing',[928] or as Francis Landy suggests: 'Israel is then the archetype of that son, destined to be stoned.'[929] A much stronger position is stated by Mayer Gruber who after comparing Deut 21:18-21 to Hosea 4:16 states that the Hosea text 'condemn[s]…the man who acts like an undisciplined cow by overindulging in wine to the point that, totally inebriated, he is tempted to engage in extra-marital sex.'[930] Gruber's interpretation rests on his assumption that זלל and סבא are simply synonymous with excessive consumption. Indeed, he asserts that 'from [Deut 21:18-21] and from Hos. 4 in its entirety we may infer that the hallmark of a wayward and defiant individual is that he/she is a glutton and a drunkard'.[931] Such a perspective unfortunately impacts the way in which Gruber reads the rest of Hosea, seeing multiple references to excessive drunkenness that are not in the Hebrew text.[932]

Some of the 'deviant' activities of the community surrounding this priesthood are mentioned in the passage I am examining. Note the striking use of the root סרר which is found in the law of the Rebellious Son (Deut 21:18, 20):

> [16] Like a rebellious (סררה) heifer,
> Israel is rebellious (סרר);
> can Yahweh now feed them
> like a lamb in a broad pasture?
> [17] Ephraim is joined to idols (עצבים),

[927] Francis Landy, *Hosea* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 53.
[928] Francis I. Anderson and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 378-9.
[929] Landy, *Hosea,* 66.
[930] Mayer I. Gruber, *Hosea: A Textual Commentary* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 234.
[931] Gruber, *Hosea*, 234.
[932] Gruber, *Hosea*, 200-201, 236-237. Also, Mayer Gruber, 'Marital Fidelity and Intimacy: A View from Hosea 4' in Athalya Brenner ed. *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 172.

He has set up for himself [a goddess].[933]
18 Their deviant drink (סבאם) is rebellious (סר),[934]
They whore around continually (הזנה הזנו);
They love the shame of her wantonness.[935]
19 A wind has wrapped them in her skirts/wings,
they shall be ashamed on account of their sacrifices
(מזבחותם).[936]
(Hos 4:16-19)

Once again, the worship of other deities is condemned. 'Idol' worship, and perhaps goddess worship, is referred to and the sexual metaphor of illicit fornication is used to convey religious adultery. Some commentators presume that actual sex, or cultic prostitution, infused with the heady experience of intoxication, is being condemned here.[937] It is, however, doubtful that cultic prostitution was in practice.[938] Instead, a pejorative sexual metaphor in combination with a derogatory reference to ritualised alcohol consumption renders this worship alien, deviant and other.

סבא is used in the midst of describing the kind of non-Yahwistic cultic practices discussed above; practices which threaten Yahweh's position as the legitimate and sole divine being within the social network of humans, deities and animals. The reference to sacrifices entails consumption of meat or vegetal offerings. It is thus probable that the consumption of alcohol, and likely also food, was a significant aspect of the worship of other divine beings that the scribes of this

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933 Following Grace Emmerson, 'A Fertility Goddess in Hosea IV 17-19?' *Vetus Testamentum* 24, (1974), 495, 497. See also Marie-Theres Wacker, 'Traces of the Goddess in the Book of Hosea' in Athalya Brenner ed. *A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 219- 41 esp. 221-3.
934 Jer 6:28 and 1 King 20:43; 21:4 also have the short form of סרר. See Anderson and Freedman, *Hosea*, 379; *HALOT* s.v. סרר Der. 770. Martin J. Buss translates this line as 'rebellious is their drinking-party', *The Prophetic Word of Hosea: A Morphological Study* (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1969), 12.
935 Following Emmerson, 'A Fertility Goddess in Hosea', 495, 497.
936 'Their sacrifices' following Gruber, *Hosea*, 240; Macintosh *Hosea*, 172; James L. Mays, *Hosea: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 76; Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 71.
937 Hans Walter Wolff, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*, trans. Gary Stansell (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 91; Andrew A. Macintosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Hosea* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 189, 171; Anderson and Freedman, *Hosea,* 379; Landy, *Hosea,* 66.
938DeGrado 'The *qdesha* in Hosea 4'; Gruber, 'Hebrew *qedesah'*; Westenholz, 'Tamar, *qědēšā*, *qadištu*'.

text find reproachable. Indeed, 4:11 states that 'whoring, wine and new wine take away understanding'. The translation of סבא into English has been met with a variety of responses from different commentators: 'drunkenness', 'liquor', 'beer', 'carousing' and 'drinking-party', for example.[939] Something like 'debauchery', loaded with shaming connotations, may come closer to its meaning in the sense that it implies deviancy, but it carries modern connotations that would be anachronistic to apply to the text.[940] It seems unlikely that a specific substance, such as beer or liquor is intended by סבא. Rather, it is a pejorative term for the drinking that is occurring in the context of cultic practices that the scribe finds reprehensible according to his Yahwistic ideology. Alcohol as a social lubricant aids in the sociality between the divine and mortal. Yahweh cannot co-exist in this network with 'idols' that is forged through the shared consumption of inebriants. Yahweh cannot abide Israel 'slutting around' in his social network; he will no longer provide nourishment for them (v. 16) because they are wrapped up in commensality with other deities.

While the scribe of Hosea directs his complaints to a community surrounding a particular cultic location, the scribe of first Isaiah criticizes the city of Zion:

> [21] How the faithful city
> has become a whore (לזונה)!
> She that was full of justice,
> righteousness lodged in her.
> […] [941]
> [22] Your silver has become dross,
> your deviant drink (סבאך) is olive juice (מהול).[942]
> [23] Your princes are rebellious ones (סוררים)

[939] 'Drunkenness': Landy, *Hosea,* 66; 'liquor': Macintosh, *Hosea*, 169; 'beer': Anderson and Freedman, *Hosea,* 378; 'carousing': Wolff, *Prophet Hosea*, 72; 'drinking-party': Buss, *The Prophetic Word*, 12.
[940] Thomas Edward McComiskey, 'Hosea' in Thomas Edward McComiskey ed., *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 72.
[941] Reading without מרצחים ועתה as it does not fit the metre. See George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah I-XXXIX*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), 31; Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, trans. R. A. Wilson (Chatham: W &J Mackay Limited, 1972), 39.
[942] Reading without במים as it is understood to be a later gloss because it disrupts the metre of the poetry. See Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, 39; Gray, *Isaiah I-XXXIX*, Vol. 1, 36. Also, reading מוהל in the light of Mishnaic Hebrew and Arabic *muhla* meaning 'the dark turbid liquid pressed out of olives'. Gray, Isaiah, 36; Hugh G. H. Williamson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 1-27*, Vol. 1 (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 122; *HALOT* s.v. מהל 552.

and companions of thieves. (Isa 1:21-23a)

Again we find the roots סרר, 'rebel' and סבא, 'drink' in proximity to each other just as in Hosea 4:18, and in Deuteronomy's Law of the Rebellious Son. This passage, however, pairs rebellion against Yahweh with neglect of the poor and vulnerable (v. 23b), issues that were likely seen to be interrelated. The subsequent text in the chapter describes a comparable situation to those we have already seen above: 'For you shall be ashamed of the oaks in which you delighted; and you shall blush for the gardens that you have chosen' (Isa 1:29). Oaks and gardens here most likely allude to mortuary rites as we saw in Isa 65:2-4; indeed this connection has been thoroughly demonstrated by Stavrakopoulou.[943] The expression of 'delight' in Isa 1:29 is evocative of the pleasurable sociality in which the participants are engaging with alternative deities. Conversely, the city has become anti-social in relation to Yahweh by rejecting his law, which Yahweh finds displeasing. The root זנה is used, another striking link with texts addressed above that also use the pejorative metaphor of sexual adultery or prostitution. Zion has not been faithful to Yahweh by both failing to follow his commands to provide for the poor and vulnerable, and also by failing to treat him as the sole divinity with whom they socialise via consumption activities.

The line 'your silver has become dross, your deviant drink is olive juice' refers to 'idolatrous' worship. In the context of Jerusalem's label as a 'whore' (לזונה), this passage alludes to the non-Yahwistic practices that the author of First Isaiah rails against. Silver is frequently the material out of which idols are made or decorated.[944] So in this poetic text, the silver idols are castigated as 'dross' because in the eyes of Yahweh they are ineffective and worthless. Similarly, the image that the 'deviant' drink – that is, alcohol consumed in association with other deities or idols – is as olive juice delivers the sentiment that such worship is meaningless. Olive juice, like olives themselves, was not a consumable substance. Instead, only olive oil was sought from olive processing, with the cloudy, bitter olive juice being a worthless waste product from the oil production

[943] Stavrakopoulou, 'Exploring the Garden of Uzza', 8-13.
[944] Isa 2:20; 30:33; 31:7; 40:18; 46:6; Ps 115:4; 135:15; Hos 8:4; 13:2; Ezek 16:17. Johanna Stiebert discusses the theme of silver and gold idols and their associated shame in Deutero-Isaiah in Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame*, 105-6.

process.[945] Indeed, Iron II towns such as Tell-en Nasbeh, Tel Beit-Mirsim, Beth Shemesh, Tel Batash and Tel Miqneh were apparently planned with the waste products of oil production in mind; most of the oil presses in these towns were built in a ring on the town outskirts, and drains allowed for the waste liquid to run out and away from the town.[946] In the same way that ritual food consumed in Isa 65:4 is referred to as 'pig flesh' and 'unclean' to render that consumption deviant (regardless of whether pig and 'unclean foods' were literally being eaten), so too Isa 1:22 renders non-normative alcohol consumption deviant and socially repulsive. Their (deviant) drink is like the worthless, bitter waste from the valuable production of an esteemed and economically profitable product.

Similar themes are found surrounding the use of the root סבא, this time as a verb, in the lengthy poem in MT Isa 56:9-57:13.[947] In particular, 56:10-57:8b is most relevant, being commonly understood as an attack on 'illegitimate' mortuary cults:

> 10 His watchmen are blind,
> they do not know;
> they are all silent dogs that cannot bark;
> having nocturnal visions (הזים), lying down (שׁכבים),[948]
> loving ritual sleep (לנום).'[949]
> 11 The dogs are strong willed;
> they do not know enough.
> The shepherds also have no understanding;
> they have all turned to their own way (לדרכם),
> each and every man for his own profit.
> 12 'Come, I will get wine;
> let us deviously drink (ונסבאה) beer.
> And tomorrow will be like today,
> great beyond measure.'[950]

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[945] About 80% of the olive became solid and liquid waste products. See Frank S. Frick, '"Oil from flinty rock" (Deut 32:13): Olive cultivation and olive oil processing in The Hebrew Bible - a socio-materialist perspective', *Semeia* 86 (1999), 4.
[946] Frick, '"Oil from flinty rock"', 11.
[947] Childs, *Isaiah,* 462; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 143.
[948] Lewis translates this as 'the seers recline' reading *ḥōzîm* with IQIsa[a], *Cults of the Dead*, 155.
[949] For comments on this verse see below discussion under heading 6.3.3 זולל and סבא in Proverbs.
[950] This verse is missing from the Greek versions.

…

3 But you, draw near,[951]
you children of a conjurer (עננה),[952]
you offspring of an adulterer who whores around (ותזנה).
4 Over whom do you delight (at the prospect of eating)?
Over whom do you open your mouth wide
and stretch out your tongue?[953]
Are you not children of transgression,
the offspring of deceit?
5 Burning passionately with gods/dead ancestors (באלים)
under every green tree;
you that slaughter your children in the valleys,
under the clefts of the rocks?
6 Among the dead (בחלקי)[954] of the wadi is your portion;[955]
they are your lot;
to them you have poured out a drink offering,
you have brought a grain offering.
Shall I be appeased for these things?
7 Upon a high and lofty mountain
you have set your grave (משכבך),
and there you went up to sacrifice.
8 Behind the door and the doorpost
you have set up your mortuary stela (זכרונך);
you tried to discover (גלית) oracles from me by bringing up spirits.[956]

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951 A possible invitation to a 'banquet of death'. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 156-7.
952 See Deut 18:10 and 2 Kgs 21:6 where the root ענן is used for consulting the dead.
953 A reference to Mot, Death, as in Ugaritic text *KTU* 5.2.2-4 and Isa 5:14; Hab 2:5. Following Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 153.
954 Reading with Ugaritic cognate *ḫlq* 'to perish'. See *DULAT* s.v. *ḫ-l-q* 388. Following the suggestion made by William H. Irwin, '"The Smooth Stones of the Wady"? Isaiah 57:6', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (1967), 31-40.
955 The wadi is a traditional burial ground. See Irwin, '"The Smooth Stones"', 37. Charles A. Kennedy proposes 'the dead of the tomb' to make this less opaque. 'Isaiah 57:5-6: Tombs in the Rocks', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 275 (1989), 49.
956 Following Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 150. See Amos 3:7 where the root גלה refers to Yahweh revealing his secrets to prophets.

That סבא is used in Isa 56:12 in conjunction with both wine and beer indicates that it does not refer to a substance such as wine, beer or another specific fluid (see also Prov 23:19-21). Instead it appears to be a root that indicates a general but pejorative act of drinking. This text, like those above, again describes acts associated with the worship of other gods and communication with the dead which included the use of food and drink offerings. It is unclear whether the activities listed here belong to the same cult or instead reflect aspects of different cultic groups.[957] Nevertheless, Ziony Zevit describes it as '…a recipe of sorts for achievement of the religiously-satisfying and pragmatically-successful life.'[958] Such a sentiment clearly was not held by the scribe who wrote this, but reflects instead the views of the practitioners who did not see their religious lives as deviant. Theodore Lewis sees a range of imagery in this passage which evokes the rituals associated with ancestor veneration and what he terms 'the cult of the dead'. Charles Kennedy also sees specific funerary rites at play here and compels commentators to move beyond the general accusation of 'idolatry'.[959] The specific divine beings in mind here do not change the fact that the social network of relations between Yahweh and the people is disrupted by these 'deviant' practices. As the divine beings' sociality is acknowledged by their response to such rituals (cf. Isa 8:19-20), Yahweh is simultaneously ignored as a social being with Israel. Thus, his identity and status as the sole legitimate god in the social network with Israel is under threat; a situation which Yahweh cannot abide.

The statement that tomorrow will be 'great beyond measure' (56:12) is likely a sarcastic remark which imitates and mocks the target of the scribe(s)' accusations. It is unlikely that individuals would have themselves referred to their drinking using the root סבא, but they may well have believed that by participating in rituals aimed as venerating the dead they did believe their futures would be improved. From the perspective of those who adhered to exclusive Yahwism, however, such a rejection of 'normative' Yahwistic beliefs and practices was equivalent to a reckless belief in self-sufficiency and an ignorance of both Yahweh's provision and impending punishment. Again the

[957] Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (London: Continuum, 2001), 530.
[958] Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 530.
[959] Kennedy, 'Isaiah 57:5-6: Tombs in the Rocks', 49.

root זנה is used (57:3) which demonstrates further comparability with the texts already examined above. Commensality with divinities other than Yahweh was conveyed pejoratively via the presentation of the food and drink consumed, but also via the pejorative use of sexual metaphor.

Ezek 23:42, our final text that utilises סבא, is set within one of the infamous adulterous bride texts of Ezekiel (the other being Ezekiel 16, discussed above). By contrast to the passages already examined, the use of סבא here appears to refer specifically to foreigners engaged in non-Yahwistic practices with Jerusalem and Samaria (Oholibah and Oholah):

> 39For when they had slaughtered their children for their idols, on the same day they came into my sanctuary to profane it. This is what they did in my house. 40They even sent for men to come from far away, to whom a messenger was sent, and they came. For them you bathed yourself, painted your eyes, and decked yourself with ornaments; 41you sat on a stately couch, with a prepared table before it on which you had placed my incense and my oil. 42The sound of a raucous multitude was at ease with her, many of the rabble brought in deviant drinkers (סובאים) from the wilderness; and they put bracelets on the arms of the women, and beautiful crowns upon their heads. 43Then I said, 'Ah, she is worn out with adulteries', but still she whores (תזנותה) and they whore (יזנה) with her. 44For they have gone in to her, as one goes in to a whore (זונה). Thus they went in to Oholah and to Oholibah, wanton women. 45But righteous judges shall declare them guilty of adultery and of bloodshed; because they are adulteresses and blood is on their hands. (Ezek 23:39-45)

Sometimes סובאים is translated as 'Sabeans', but in the context it seems reasonable to perceive this term as a pejorative label for the foreigners with whom the sisters have been interacting. Alternatively, as suggested by Moshe Greenberg סובאים could refer to the drinks themselves, he thus renders it 'wines' but I would render it 'deviant drinks' that were brought from the wilderness.[960]

[960] Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 486.

Certainly, stating that the סובאים are from the wilderness, whether people or drinks, 'others' them further. Galambush describes the scene as a defiling, 'rowdy party' in the temple, although the text is obscure.[961] It would appear that food is served for the foreigners alongside high status items, oil and incense, so we can perhaps envisage some kind of high status feasting event occurring inside the temple. The majority of the chapter chastises the sisters for their 'deviant' worship. This worship includes child sacrifice (23:37-39), but in this chapter the author mixes 'political infidelity' with 'deviant' ritual acts.[962] The use of the root זנה in relation to סובאים is of a piece with many texts already discussed. Consequently, it is reasonable to suggest that in this text the root סבא indexes 'deviant', non-Yahwistic acts, related to the consumption of alcohol.

Overall, סבא appears to be used in instances of consumption which are not dissimilar to the 'deviant' episodes of consumption found to have other features in common with the Law of the Rebellious Son. The use of alcoholic beverages to enhance the mind and to attempt to reach the divine, as discussed in previous chapters, was likely condemned when this did not involve Yahweh as the sole recipient or partner in alcohol consumption. Therefore, it seems acceptable to suggest that סבא refers not to excessive consumption of alcohol, but instead to the ritual use of alcohol in cultic, ritual scenarios that were considered non-Yahwistic, and therefore also 'deviant'.

6.3.2 זולל in Jeremiah 15:19 and Lamentations 1:11

The root זלל appears to be extremely rare and thus I have only two examples outside of Proverbs and Deuteronomy (in Qal) to discuss. The first brief occurrence in Jer 15:19 is used to provide Jeremiah with conditions for his role as Yahweh's prophet:

> Therefore thus says Yahweh:
> If you turn back, I will take you back,
> and you shall stand before me.
> If you bring forth what is precious

[961] Galambush, *The City as Yahweh's Wife*, 119.
[962] Galambush, *The City as Yahweh's Wife*, 119.

> instead of the deviant (מזולל),
> you shall serve as my mouth.
> It is they who will turn to you,
> not you who will turn to them.

Jeremiah can be Yahweh's mouthpiece if he utters the 'precious' rather than the 'deviant'. Or, perhaps, the meaning is meant to imply that Jeremiah should not put in his mouth, i.e. consume, anything deviant. While the root זלל is not used again in Jeremiah, much of Jeremiah's prophesying focuses on the elimination of non-Yahwistic practices.[963] It is therefore not unreasonable that in this context זלל refers generally to anything contrary to the law of Yahweh, and perhaps more specifically to non-Yahwistic consumption practices.

In the first chapter of Lamentations, a narrator laments for Zion, personified as a lamenting woman assaulted by the Babylonians:

> Enemies have stretched out their hands
> over all her temple treasures[964] (מחמדיה);
> she has seen enter her temple, the gentiles,
> those whom you commanded:
> 'They must not enter your assembly.'
> All her people are groaning,
> they seek bread (לחם);
> they gave their treasures[965] (מחמודיהם) for food (באכל)
> to revive their soul.
> 'Look, Yahweh, and see
> how deviant (זללה) I have become.' (Lam 1:10-11)

Verse 10 reports that foreign nations have entered Jerusalem's holy sanctuary to plunder the temple treasures. Commentators have pointed out the likely allusion to the commandment in Deut 23:3-4 that no Ammonite or Moabite is

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[963] For example Jer 1:6; 2:20-25; 3:9,13; 7:8-34; 10:1-16; 16:10-13; 17:2; 19:1-13; 44:1-28.
[964] מחמדים 'precious or lovely things' are frequently used in relation to the temple, see Joel 3:5; Ezek 24:21; Lam 2:4; Isa 64:11; 2 Chr 36:19.
[965] Some commentators have suggested this refers to the trading of children for food. See Delbert Hillers, *Lamentations: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 26; Robert Gordis, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations: A Study, Modern Translation and Commentary* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1974), 157.

permitted to enter the assembly of Israel.[966] With the temple sullied by foreign invaders, people are left looking for food and trading their valuables for a meal. Stiebert points out that the presence of foreigners in the land, in Jeremiah, is polluting and specifically curtails the 'fruitfulness' of the land (Jer 23:10);[967] food production is thus disrupted by the invasion of the 'other'. The 'defiling' nature of foreigners in relation to food and the temple also appears to be present in Ezekiel 44 (vv. 7-8, 13), not to mention the comparison made between living among foreigners and food cooked on human faeces (Ezek 4:12-13).[968]

Zion then describes herself as זללה, the same root found in the law of the Rebellious Son and Prov 23:20-21, 28:7, which is usually translated as 'glutton'. The problematic combination of people with little food and the term 'glutton', indicating a surfeit of food, has been noted by commentators. For instance, R. B. Salters cites Deut 21:20 and Prov 23:20 in commenting: 'in the context of famine, [gluttony] would seem strange in the extreme, unless one were to take it ironically.'[969] Indeed, the assumption that the root זלל refers to gluttony makes this passage difficult to understand. One proposed solution has been to suggest that the root in Lam 1:11 is instead זול meaning 'to be cheap or worthless'.[970] Robert Gordis also translates the word as 'worthless' but on the basis that זלל is used as the opposite of 'precious' in Jer 15:19, discussed above.[971] Another suggestion, put forward by Victor Hurowitz and followed by Adele Berlin, looks to the Akkadian *zilulû* meaning 'tramp, vagabond' which thus renders the line in Lamentations as 'see what a beggar I have become'.[972] Lauress Wilkins translates the word as 'a nobody' but provides no reasoning for this choice.[973] A

[966] Adele Berlin, *Lamentations: A Commentary* (Louisville, Westminster John Knox, 2002), 55; Hillers, *Lamentations*, 25; Gordis, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations*, 156; Robert B. Salters, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Lamentations* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 65.
[967] Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame,* 125-6.
[968] Johanna Stiebert, *The Exile and the Prophet's Wife: Historical Events and Marginal Perspectives* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2005), 77.
[969] Salters, *Lamentations*, 70 and works cited there. See also Gordis, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations*, 157.
[970] Salters, *Lamentations*, 71.
[971] Gordis, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations*, 157.
[972] Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, 'זוללה = Peddler/Tramp/Vagabond/Beggar Lamentations I 11 in Light of Akkadian zilulû' *Vetus Testamentum* (1999), 542-545; Berlin, *Lamentations,* 43, 46.
[973] Lauress Wilkins 'War, Famine and Baby Stew: A Recipe for Disaster in the Book of Lamentations' in Sheila E. McGinn, Lai Ling Elizabeth Ngan, and Ahida Calderón Pilarski eds. *By Bread Alone: The Bible Through the Eyes of the Hungry* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 73.

further suggestion advanced by Heath Thomas rests on the interpretation of Prov 23:20-1 as referring to the excessive consumption of food:

> One may conclude that in particular contexts where *zll* is used as a Qal participle, its semantics has to do with a 'rash' lack of consideration about an action, often a 'lack of thought' about the effects of too much food, as mentioned above (Prov 23:20, 21).[974]

He therefore renders the word in Lam 1:11 as 'thoughtless' in the sense that she did not think about the law, because she has 'played the whore' and 'sinned a great sin'.[975] Needless to say Thomas addresses neither what the effects of too much food might be in this context, nor why Prov 23:20-1 should be understood to refer to excessive food consumption over any other understanding of the text.

Such wrestling with the text is perhaps unnecessary when my previous discussion is considered in relation to this passage. I have demonstrated that food consumption has particular socio-religious significances that construct and maintain relational identities within a social network. Within a Yahwistic framework, the role of the temple in the sacrificing and processing of food was imperative for Jerusalem. Consider commands which render consumption Yahwistically legitimate, such as the command to sacrifice only at the central place (Deut 12:5-14, 26-27), and the command in Num 15:18-19, in which any time an Israelite eats of the bread of the land an offering has to be made to Yahweh. If the temple has been compromised by foreign invasion then it cannot fulfil its function as a legitimator of food for the people. The city-woman Zion says she has become זללה because her food can no longer be rendered appropriate for consumption in a Yahwistic social network. There are repeated requests by city-woman Zion for Yahweh to see her and the suffering she is enduring. It becomes apparent that the punishment exceeds her crimes:

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[974] Heath Thomas, 'The Meaning of zōlēlâ (Lam 1:11) One More Time', *Vetus Testamentum* 61 (2011), 495.
[975] Thomas, 'The Meaning of zōlēlâ', 497.

> The invocation uttered in the voices of the personified city, poet and community (1.9c, 11 c; 3.59, 60; 5.1) for Yahweh to see the injustice suffered by the community takes on a tone of indictment when read against the background of 2.20-22. In these verses personified Zion tells Yahweh to look at the violence (‘ll) he has wrought. Women were forced to eat their own children, and priests and prophets were slain in the very house that was to guarantee their protection.[976]

Yahweh’s punishment has led Zion to eat her own children and to the defilement of Yahweh’s temple. With such an extreme punishment in mind, Zion’s cry in Lam 1:11 (‘Look Yahweh, and see how deviant I have become’) takes on further meaning. Yahweh’s actions have pushed Zion into further deviance. If the slaying of children for sacrificial offerings of food to other deities, and the defiling feasting in the temple (both in Ezek 23:39-45 discussed above), were seen as idolatrous, adulterous and deviant, then so too is the outcome of the very punishment Yahweh inflicts because of those crimes. More children are slaughtered by women and the temple is defiled by the blood of murder. Thus, Zion’s cry is one of tragic frustration; her punishment is no corrective to the prior situation, it has perpetuated and exacerbated the deviant state of affairs.

Zion goes on to explain why such a fate has befallen her:

> Yahweh is righteous,
> for I have rebelled (מריתי) against his word;
> but hear (שמעו־נא), all you peoples,
> and behold my suffering;
> my young women and young men
> have gone into captivity.
> I called to my lovers
> but they deceived me;

[976] Frederick W. Dobbs-Allsopp, ‘Tragedy, tradition, and theology in the book of Lamentations’, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 22 (1997), 38-9.

my priests and elders
perished in the city
while seeking food (אכל)
to revive their soul.
See, Yahweh, how distressed I am;
my stomach churns,
my heart is wrung within me,
because rebelliously I have rebelled (מרו מריתי).
Outside the sword bereaves (שׁכלה);
in the house it is as death. (Lam 1:18-20)

The personified Zion/Jerusalem declares that she was rebellious (מרה) in regard to the word of Yahweh, and she compels the people to listen (שׁמע). The second word used to describe the Rebellious Son in Deut 21:18, מרה, is used three times by Zion; rebelliously she has rebelled.[977] The priests and elders of the city have died in their plight for finding food that would revive them. Is this because there is no food that they are willing to eat? All consumption has been rendered deviant in the wake of Yahweh's abandonment, and the destruction of his temple.

Yahweh proclaimed that he would bring the sword against those who worshipped Meni and Gad in Isa 65:12 and here in Lam 1:20 the sword has fulfilled that destiny. Zion deems the judgement of Yahweh to be just, but she laments the execution of her children. The root שׁכל implies the slaying of children specifically, and the captured young women and men in v.18 may evoke a maternal anxiety in Zion. Children are also referenced in vv. 5, 15 and 16, perhaps to highlight the unacceptable tragedy that the punishment is paid by those who are most vulnerable and innocent.[978] That both father and mother are featured in the law of the Rebellious Son, and that they are witness to their child's death, bears striking similarity to the disaster imposed on city-woman

[977] In the context of the 'graphic and detailed' punishment Yahweh has inflicted on city-woman Zion, the claim that 'Yahweh is righteous', according to Stiebert, 'rings rather hollow'. Johanna Stiebert, 'Shame and the body in Psalms and Lamentations of the Hebrew Bible and in Thanksgiving Hymns from Qumran', *Old Testament Essays* 20 (2007), 821. See also Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Tragedy, tradition, and theology', 37.
[978] Dobbs-Allsopp, 'Tragedy, tradition, and theology', 38.

Zion. Like the parents of the Rebellious Son, Zion knows of her children's deviant behaviour; while in Deuteronomy we do not see the parents' mourning, Zion's lament is perhaps representative.[979]

6.3.3 זולל and סבא in Proverbs

> Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way (בדרך). Do not be among deviant wine drinkers (בסבאי־יין), or among deviant eaters of meat (בזוללי בשׂר); for the deviant drinker (סבא) and the deviant eater (זולל) will be dispossessed (יורשׁ), and ritual sleep (נומה) will clothe them with rent pieces (קרעים). (Prov 23:19-21)

> He who keeps the law is a son of understanding, but companions of deviant eaters (זוללים) shame their parents. (Prov 28:7)

Other than the law of the Rebellious Son, Prov 23:19-21 is the only place in which זולל and סבא occur together and the only place in which meat and wine are used in a construct form with them. Thus, this text is particularly significant for scholars discussing the meaning of זולל and סבא in Deut 21:18-21. Most versions and commentators translate Prov 23:21 as: 'for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe them with rags.'[980] This kind of interpretation focuses on the idea that the problem with being a 'glutton' and 'drunkard' is that it will lead to financial difficulty - presumably because the continual and excessive consumption of wine and meat was a costly endeavour.[981] In the light of my previous chapters and the discussion above,

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[979] Xuan Huong Thi Pham comments that Lamentations 1 is a lament whose main concern is for 'the mourner who is mourning dead and exiled children', *Mourning in the ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 58.

[980] NRSV and see Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 10-31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 735; William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* (London: SCM Press, 1970), 388; Crawford H. Toy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs* (Edinburgh: T& T Clark, 1899), 435.

[981] Such an explanation has been provided by the following scholars: Fox, *Proverbs 10-31,* 735-6; Carey Ellen Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake:

however, זולל and סבא do not appear to have any connotations of excessive consumption in Hebrew Bible texts. What is also pertinent is that the son in both Prov 23:19 and 28:7 is instructed not to 'be among' or a 'companion' of those who are זוללים. This therefore does not suggest an individual who is eating on his own in an excessive manner, but instead a group or community with whom the son should not be seen.

Prov 28:7 sets up the opposition between somebody who keeps the law and somebody who associates with זוללים, thus it is probable that a זולל is an individual who has broken Yahweh's law. Doing so 'shames his parents' which reflects certain anthropological perspectives on honour and shame in which disgrace can be conferred to those in the social group with which one identifies.[982] Thus, whatever consumption the son is engaged in in Prov 28:7, it is deemed non-normative and a source of shame that not only implicates Yahweh but also the parents. If Prov 28:7 is earlier than Deut 21:18-21, which is likely, one could speculate that the conduct which conferred shame to parents was later regarded as more potently problematic and thus necessitated the parents' actions as set out in Deut 21:18-21. As there are no biblical laws against excessive consumption, these texts most likely refer to the context of consumption. The group or community context gels well with my earlier discussion about groups of people who were engaged in the worship of other deities and the dead. Therefore, the terms used in Prov 23:21b should be viewed with fresh eyes.

The root ירׁש refers to the possession and inheritance of land, being an heir, and the dispossession of land from previous occupants.[983] In Prov 23:21 the root is pointed as a Niphal thus providing the meaning of 'be dispossessed' or 'be disinherited'. In texts which describe the dispossession of the land from the Canaanites to the Israelites this root is used, for example:

> When Yahweh your God thrusts them out before you, do not say to yourself, "It is because of my righteousness that Yahweh has

Eisenbrauns, 2000), 223; Bellefontaine, 'Deuteronomy 21: 18-21', 22-3; Jonathan P. Burnside, *The Signs of Sin: Seriousness of Offence in Biblical Law* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 43; Joseph Fleishman, 'Legal Innovation in Deuteronomy xxi 18-20', *Vetus Testamentum* 53 (2003), 324-5.

[982] Johanna Stiebert, 'The Inculcation of Social Behaviour in Proverbs', *Old Testament Essays* 17 (2004), 288.

[983] *HALOT* s.v. ירׁש I, 441.

> brought me in to occupy this land"; it is rather because of the wickedness of these nations that Yahweh is dispossessing (מוריׁשם) them before you. (Deut 9:4)

In similar texts the peoples being 'dispossessed' of the land are accused of serving their gods on mountains, and under green trees (Deut 12:1-2), using conjurers and diviners (Deut 18:14), making stone and metal idols, and using במתם,'their cult places' (Num 33:52-3). The Israelites are thus also instructed to destroy all of these cultic objects upon entering the land in order that they do not make cultic use of them. Thus, continued possession of the land is also contingent on the 'correct' worship of Yahweh. The destruction of such ritually potent objects not only erases their powerful presence and their associated deities from the land, but it was also meant to prevent the Israelites from being tempted to utilise those objects in their own worship. Their loyalty to Yahweh is the prerequisite for life in the land, for themselves and for their future generations of sons and daughters: 'But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess (לרׁשתה)' (Deut 30:17-18).[984] I have established that one of the associations of being a deviant eater and drinker (זולל וסבא) was the worship of other deities, including 'idols' and the divine dead, and evidently these behaviours were not compatible with possession of the land. Thus, the use of יורׁש in Prov 23:21 is better understood as the threat of losing residence in the land due to the non-Yahwistic activities of which 'deviant' eating and drinking were a part.

Commentators typically assume the final phrase of Prov 23:21 indexes 'drowsiness' and 'rags', suggesting a drunken laziness and poverty so extreme clothing cannot be repaired or replaced because of the financial drain of eating and drinking excessively. The word that is translated as 'rags', קרעים, comes from the root קרע, 'rend' and is used in Hebrew Bible texts in which something is purposefully torn. Most often this verb is used when somebody rends their clothes in a mourning rite.[985] There are no occurrences of this root that refer to

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[984] Cf. Deut 4:3-6; Deut 5:31-3; Deut 11:16-17; Deut 28:63; 1 Chr 28:8-9; Ezr 9:11-12; Ezek 33:25.

[985] Occurrences in the context of mourning or lament are: Gen 37:29; Gen 37:34; Gen 44:13; Num 14:6; Jos 7:6; Judg 11:35; 1 Sam 4:12; 2 Sam 1:2, 11, 3:31, 13:19, 31; 15:32; 1 Kgs

contexts of poverty or old, worn out clothing, but only purposeful tearing or rending. Compare the following text from Jer 38:11-12 in which old, worn out clothes or rags are intended:

> So Ebed-melech took the men with him and went to the house of the king, to a basement of the storehouse, and took from there worn out[986] rags[987] (בלוי הסחבות) and worn out clothes[988] (בלוי מלחים), which he let down to Jeremiah in the cistern by ropes. Then Ebed-melech the Cushite said to Jeremiah, 'Just put the worn out rags (בלואי הסחבות) and worn out clothes (והמלחים) between your armpits and the ropes.'

In this text, Ebed-melech provides Jeremiah with old clothes to create a protective barrier between the ropes and Jeremiah's skin. By doing this it is the clothing that will be rubbed away by the ropes rather than his skin and flesh, thus we can see that old, worn clothes were used rather than new. It is therefore clear in this text (and others which mention worn out clothing)[989] that Prov 23:21 is extremely unlikely to be referring to 'rags' resulting from the financial impact of excessive eating and drinking. Instead, garments that were rent intentionally are in view.

Given that the rending of garments usually occurs in states of mourning or petitionary lament, the question arises as to why נומה would dress a deviant eater and drinker in ritually rent pieces (Prov 23:21). The noun נומה derives from the root נום 'sleep', and occurs only once in the Hebrew Bible (the verb occurs six times). But an Ugaritic cognate of נומה, *nhmmt*, occurs in the Tale of King Kirta:

21:27; 2 Kgs 2:12, 5:7-8, 6:30, 11:14, 18:37, 19:1, 22:11, 19: 2 Chr 23:13, 34:19, 27; Ezr 9:3, 5; Est 4:1; Job 1:20, 2:12; Eccl 3:7; Isa 36:22 37:1; Jer 36:24, 41:5; Joel 2:13. Occurrences not in the context of mourning: Exod 28:32, 39:23; Lev 13:56; 1 Sam 15:27-8, 28:17; 1 Kigs 11:11-13, 30-31, 13:3, 5, 14:8; 2 Kgs 17:21; Ps 35:15; Isa 64:1; Jer 4:30, 22:14, 36:23; Ezek 13:20-21; Hos 13:8.

[986] From the root בלה meaning 'be worn out', *HALOT*, s.v. בלה, 132. See also Jos 9:13; Neh 9:21; Deut 8:4, 29:4; Isa 50:9, 51:6; Ps 102:27; Sir 14:17.

[987] From the root סחב meaning 'drag along', *HALOT* s.v. סחב, 749. Presumably the meaning is 'clothing that has been dragged around'.

[988] From the root מלח meaning 'dissipate', *BDB*, s.v. מָלַח I, 571. See Isa 51:6: '…for the heavens will dissipate (נמלחו) like smoke, the earth will wear out (תבלה) like a garment…'

[989] See footnotes 987 and 988 above.

Kirta saw his family,
He saw his family ruined,
His dwelling entirely destroyed.
In its totality the family perished,
In its entirety the heirs.

He enters his room, he weeps,
Repeating his groans, he sheds tears.
His tears gush forth,
Like one-shekel weights to the ground,
Like five-shekel weights to the bed.

As he weeps, he falls asleep,
As he sheds tears, there is slumber (*nhmmt*).
Sleep overpowers him and he lies down,
Slumber (*nhmmt*) and he curls up (*yqmṣ*).

In his [Kirta's] dream 'Ilu descended,
In his vision, the father of mankind.[990]
(*KTU* 1.14 I:22-38)

After the death of his wives King Kirta is extremely distressed because he now has no way to procure an heir. He weeps profusely and loudly and starts to fall asleep, leading to a visitation from the head of the pantheon, El ('Ilu). While the typical preparatory stages of an incubation rite (described in the previous chapter) are not stated in *KTU* 1.14 I:22-38, Koowon Kim argues that the literary device of an incubation ritual is being utilised which would have been recognised by its intended audience who were familiar with incubation visions: 'The simple succession of motifs, from Kirta's predicament to his weeping and to divine theophany, would have been sufficient for the audience to associate the text with the practice of incubation…'[991] The position Kirta takes in association with *nhmmt* is one associated with the posture assumed by an

[990] Translation by Koowon Kim, *Incubation as a Type-Scene in the ʾAqhatu, Kirta, and Hannah Stories A Form-Critical and Narratological Study of KTU 1.14 I–1.15 III, 1.17 I–II, and 1 Samuel 1:1–2:11* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 169-196.
[991] Kim, *Incubation as a Type-Scene*, 180.

incubant as indicated by the verb *qmṣ.*[992] His lying down and curling up are performative actions used for 'the technical idea of sleeping for a revelatory dream'.[993] I would also argue that the double usage of *nhmmt* is also a technical term used for sleep in which divine visions are experienced. While a later text, a Judeo-Aramaic magic bowl from Mesopotamia (c. 600 CE) also uses the noun נומה in a similar context:[994]

> [1] And let them not restore sleep to her eyes;
> [2] and let them not restore slumber (נומה) in her body;
> [3] in her dreams and her visions, let their images awaken her;
> [4] and let life be made unfit for her
> [5] by Shamesh, and Sin, and Nabu, and Dalebat,
> [6] and Bel, and Nereg, and Kewan.[995]

This incantation appears to be encouraging the deities and demons mentioned in lines 5-6 to awaken the one having dreams and visions from sleep and נומה. The scribe, or client of the scribe, is using this incantation to prevent the targeted individual from receiving divine visions during נומה. Another form originating from the root נום is תנומה, and is used in Elihu's description of a divine dream in the book of Job:

> Why do you contend against him,
> saying, 'He will answer none of my words'?
> [14] For Yahweh speaks in one way,
> and in two, though people do not perceive it.
> [15] In a dream, in a vision (חזיון) of the night,
> when deep sleep falls on mortals,
> in ritual slumbers (תנומות) on their beds,
> [16] then he opens their ears,
> and terrifies them with warnings.
>
> (Job 33:13-16 cf. Job 4:13-16)

[992] Kim, *Incubation as a Type-Scene*, 185.
[993] Kim, *Incubation as a Type-Scene*, 185.
[994] Julian Obermann, 'Two magic bowls: new incantation texts from Mesopotamia', *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 57 (1940), 18.
[995] Lines 1-6 of the Imprecatory Incantation translated in Obermann, 'Two magic bowls', 19.

This text from Job is likely the clearest example of the ritual connotations that the root נום could carry in certain contexts. While most occurrences of the verb נום are used for sleeping more generically, its verbal use in Isa 56:10 is more specific, being paired with the root הזה. This root is kindred to חזה and both have the sense of receiving visions, though הזה is more associated with sleep than חזה:[996] 'His watchmen are blind, they do not know; they are all silent dogs that cannot bark; having nocturnal visions (הזים), lying down (שׁכבים), loving ritual sleep (לנום).' One could argue that 'watchmen' here alludes to prophets or other professionals who received divine visions. The expression 'lying down', from שׁכב, is also considered to be a verb which implies sleep for a specific purpose, such as to receive a vision, and thus three verbs in 56:10b all appear to indicate that what is being referred to are divine dreams or visions.[997]

While I am not suggesting that the root נום only refers to ritual sleep, it does appear likely that it could carry these connotations, especially when used as a noun. Therefore, the use of נומה in Prov 23:21 seems more likely to refer to the nocturnal practices that elicited visions and oracles from divine beings because it is used in the context of זולל וסבא which are associated with non-Yahwistic consumption practices that likely included incubation rites (as in Isa 65:2-5). This raises the question of why ritual sleep would lead to the wearing of rent garments. Rent garments signalled a ritual status, a status associated with the mourner: separation from Yahweh.

The rending of garments typically (although not exclusively) occurs in contexts in which an individual, or a group, mourns or laments for the death of a close friend or relative. This appears to be an act which not only portrays the distress and utter despair of loss, but also serves to identify the mourner with the deceased. This sentiment is perhaps most explicitly stated by Jacob when he hears of Joseph's (alleged) death in Gen 37:34-35: he rends his garments and puts on sackcloth, explaining that 'I shall descend to my son in Sheol while in this state of mourning'. This idea of descending to Sheol in mourning also occurs in Ugaritic texts, such as when the god El laments over the death of Baal:

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[996] *BDB* s.v. חָזָה 223; *HALOT* s.v. הזה 243; *BDB* s.v. חָזָה I, 302-303; *HALOT* s.v. חזה 301.
[997] Thomas H. McAlpine, *Sleep, Divine & Human, in the Old Testament* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 65–71.

El the kind, the compassionate
Descends from the throne and sits on the footstool,
From the footstool he [descends and] sits upon the ground
He strews stalks of mourning on his head,
The dust in which he wallows on his pate.
His clothing he tears, down to the loincloth,
His skin he bruises with a rock by pounding,
With a razor he cuts his beard and whiskers.
He rakes his upper arms,
he ploughs his breast like a garden,
Like a valley he rakes his chest. (*CTA* 5.6. 11-25)

El progresses, stage by stage, from his throne, to the footstool, to the ground; a ritual descent into Sheol. This movement towards the one for whom the mourning is being performed appears to be 'an explicit identification with the plight of the dead.'[998] This identification with the dead is likely expressed in the other mourning rites as well such covering themselves with ash or dirt, wearing sack cloth, fasting and not anointing with oil.[999] By performing what may be considered the opposite of everyday behaviours, the mourner enacts his ritual distinction from the non-mourning, living community, and the celebratory acts of worship in the cult.[1000] Both the movement towards Sheol, and the bodily modifications made by the mourner are likely intended to imitate the dead in appearance and location.[1001] Saul Olyan suggests that the act of tearing one's garments may have been symbolic of the physical separation of the dead from the living.[1002] But in the Hebrew Bible, being separated from the living also means being separated from Yahweh, as Ps 88:3-5 illustrates:

[998] Anderson, *A Time to Mourn*, 69.
[999] Jer 6:26; 2 Sam 1: 12; 3: 35, 14:2. Other scholars have also noted the identification of the mourner with the dead, see: Emanuel Feldman, *Biblical and Post-Biblical Defilement and Mourning: Law as Theology* (New York: KTAV/Yeshiva University Press, 1977), 93; Baruch A. Levine and Jean-Michel de Tarragon, 'Dead Kings and Rephaim: The Patrons of the Ugaritic Dynasty', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104 (1984), 658; Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead,* 177-8; Klass Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (neukirchenVluyn: neukirchener Verlag, 1986), 245-6.
[1000] Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*, 32-3.
[1001] Anderson, *A Time to Mourn*, 89; Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*, 41.
[1002] Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*, 33.

> For my soul is full of troubles,
> and my life draws near to Sheol.
> I am counted among those who go down to the Pit;
> I am like those who have no help,
> like those forsaken among the dead,
> like the slain that lie in the grave,
> like those whom you remember no more,
> for they are cut off from your hand.

Yahweh does not remember the dead and the dead do not have access to Yahweh's care or provision. This idea may also be present in the treatment of someone with a skin disease who must wear torn clothes, have dishevelled hair and live outside the camp in the wilderness (Lev 13:45-46). This person is ritually and socially dead, thus they are unclean and cannot be a part of Yahwistic celebrations in association with the cult.[1003] While we do not know whether ancient Israelites and Judahites actually conceived of the dead as wearing rent clothes, we can perhaps infer that torn clothes were evocative of a person in mourning, a person who is separated from Yahweh like the dead in Sheol.

The root קרע is also used to refer to the rending of the kingdom away from the king:

> Samuel said to Saul, 'I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of Yahweh, and Yahweh has rejected you from being king over Israel.' As Samuel turned to go away, Saul caught hold of the hem of his robe, and it tore (ויקרע). And Samuel said to him, 'Yahweh has torn (קרע) the kingdom of Israel from you this very day, and has given it to a neighbour of yours, who is better than you' (1 Sam 15:26-28 cf. 1 Sam 28:17).

The kingdom is also torn away from the hand of Solomon (1 Kgs 11:11-13, 30-31, 14:8; 2 Kgs 17:21), and in both cases it is because of a rejection of Yahweh and his laws. Some scholars have commented on the mourning activities, including tearing garments, undertaken by Judahites as a result of the exile and

[1003] Anderson, *A Time to Mourn*, 87.

the destruction of the Temple in 587 BCE (Jer 41-45; Zech 7:4-5).[1004] In Ezra 9:3-4, Ezra tears his garments when he hears that the Judean exiles have been inter-marrying with foreign women. Tearing, and especially the action of tearing clothing, manifests a rift between an individual and Yahweh. The bodily performance of that rift appears to infer an acknowledgement of separation or distance from Yahweh; a separation embodied also by the destruction of the Temple and the act of marrying non-Judeans, from the perspective of Ezra.

Ritual sleep then, or נומה, as a reference to the non-Yahwistic practices of eliciting dreams from divine beings which may have included the deified dead, is cast in Prov 23:21 as something which will clothe the זולל וסבא in rent pieces. The wearing of rent clothes, and the root קרע itself, had connotations of separation from Yahweh. I therefore propose that the meaning of Prov 23:21 is that those who participate in those non-Yahwistic practices will effectively be rent from Yahweh themselves. They will be clothed instead with their utter desolation from Yahweh. When one compares this to the preceding statement, that the deviant eater will be dispossessed from the land, the two statements are actually in parallel. Dispossession of the land, as a result of non-Yahwistic practices, is synonymous with separation from Yahweh, as the exile itself was believed to be.

The mention of זולל and סבא in Prov 23:19-21 and Prov 28:7, which have been typically used to decipher the meaning of the law of the Rebellious Son, are used to refer to the consequences of non-Yahwistic practices. While the texts in Proverbs are not legalistic in the same way Deut 21:18-21 is intended to be, their poetic or symbolic language still conveys the sense that the consequence of rejecting Yahweh leads to one's own rejection by Yahweh. As discussed above, Yahweh cannot co-exist in a social network with other deities and thus his response is to remove the worshippers of other deities from his network. This removal is evident in the language of 'dispossession' (of the land) and the image of wearing rent pieces which signals separation from Yahweh. Now that

[1004] Pham, *Mourning in the ancient Near East,* 38; Yair Hoffman, 'The Fasts in the Book of Zechariah and the Fashioning of National Remembrance' in Oded Lipschitz and Joseph Blenkinsopp eds. *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 205-6.

all occurrences of זלל and סבא have been addressed, I shall return to the laws of Deuteronomy.

6.4 Returning to Deuteronomy

Across the Hebrew Bible, consumption activities comparable to the crime of the Rebellious Son appear to be those in which divine beings are worshipped that disrupt the appropriate relationship between Yahweh and his worshippers; they make Yahweh jealous. The scribes of these texts ascribe to a 'Yahweh only' ideology in which the worship of other gods is equivalent to the abandonment of the only god Israel should worship. Now that I have created a tableau of what 'deviant' consumption looked like across biblical texts, I shall return to the laws of Deuteronomy in an attempt to find comparable legal texts to the law of the Rebellious Son. Subsequently I will discuss the ideology of Deuteronomy and the way in which texts such as the law of the Rebellious Son perpetuate and inculcate its world view.

In addition to the law of the Rebellious Son, two further laws in Deuteronomy dictate that stoning is the required punishment for a crime:

> If anyone secretly entices you – even if it is your brother, your father's son or your mother's son, or your own son or daughter, or the wife you embrace, or your most intimate friend – saying, 'Let us go worship other gods,' whom neither you nor your ancestors have known, 7 any of the gods of the peoples that are around you, whether near you or far away from you, from one end of the earth to the other, 8 you must not yield to or heed any such persons. Show them no pity or compassion and do not shield them. 9 But you shall surely kill them; your own hand shall be first against them to execute them, and afterwards the hand of all the people. 10 Stone them to death for trying to turn you away from Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 11 Then all Israel shall hear and fear, and never again do any such wickedness (Deut 13:6-11).

In this law, the audience is told that if a family member, including a son or daughter, engages in and encourages the communal worship of gods that are not Yahweh, then they must be killed by stoning. As a result 'all Israel shall hear and fear', just like in Deut 21:21. What is different in the legal proceedings of this law is that the family member is not instructed to bring the criminal to the elders of the city and provide a testimony. Instead, it would appear that the criminal's verbal admittance that they want to go and worship other gods is enough for the whole people to join in with the execution.[1005] A second law concerning stoning is also pertinent:

> You must not sacrifice to Yahweh your God an ox or a sheep that has a defect, anything seriously wrong; for that is abhorrent to Yahweh your God. 2 If there is found among you, in one of your towns that Yahweh your God is giving you, a man or woman who does what is evil in the sight of Yahweh your God, and transgresses his covenant 3 by going to serve other gods and worshiping them—whether the sun or the moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have forbidden— 4 and if it is reported to you or you hear of it, and you make a thorough inquiry, and the charge is proved true that such an abhorrent thing has occurred in Israel, 5 then you shall bring out to your gates that man or that woman who has committed this crime and you shall stone the man or woman to death. 6 On the evidence of two or three witnesses the death sentence shall be executed; a person must not be put to death on the evidence of only one witness. 7 The hands of the witnesses shall be the first raised against the person to execute the death penalty, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from your midst (Deut 17:1-7).

In this law, there appears to be a movement from the instruction not to offer any sacrificial animal that is not in perfect ritual health, to the instruction not to serve or worship other deities. It is almost as if the thought process of the scribe(s) here moved from the instruction not to feed Yahweh anything 'deviant' to the instruction that people should also not eat 'deviously' themselves by sharing in

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[1005] Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 167.

consumption with other deities. In this law, the suspected 'idolater' is brought to the city gates like the Rebellious Son, but the elders are not consulted explicitly. Instead two or three witnesses are required before execution by stoning can take place. Perhaps the two parents of the Rebellious Son reflect this need for two witnesses. The law ends with the *bi'artā* provision that the evil will be purged from the midst of the community, as in Deut 21:21.

In yet another law the annihilation of an entire town is required in response to the worship of other gods (Deut 13:12-18). In this circumstance, Yahweh's people are charged with going to the town and destroying everybody, and every animal, by the use of swords, rather than stones. Again, in Deut 13:1-5 the 'prophet' or 'dreamer of dreams' who leads an Israelite to worship other deities should also be put to death in order to purge the evil from the midst of the people.

Given that food and drink functioned as a primary component of ritual and religious life in ancient Israel and Judah, and noting the stark similarity between these laws and the law of the Rebellious Son in terms of ideology and language, it seems reasonable to assume that Deut 21:18-21 is of a piece with these legal scenarios. Deuteronomy 12, the preceding chapter to these similar laws (except Deut 17:1-7), specifically lays out the 'legitimate' acts of sacrifice and consumption for the Israelites. Centralisation of the cult, and the related right regulation of sacrificial offerings, was 'a way of disrupting popular but problematic religious practices, making supervision by an orthodox, central authority possible.'[1006] As food was a potent agent in relation to social action, the successful control of food amounts to control of society. Whether centralisation was ever completely implemented and enforced is impossible to know, but its propagation in Deuteronomy 12 offers a practical means of enforcing the laws that follow it in chapter 13. If there are new instructions that dictate what 'legitimate' consumption is, then it is not unexpected to have a law which deals with 'deviant' consumption and the treatment of those who participate in such acts. I propose that the law of the Rebellious Son is a law specifically attending to the consumption activities involved in the worship of

[1006] Nelson, *Deuteronomy,* 149-50. On the problems with labels such as 'popular' and 'orthodox' religion see Francesca Stavrakopoulou, '"Popular" Religion and "Official" Religion: Practice, Perception, Portrayal', 37-58 in F. Stavrakopoulou and J. Barton eds. *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* (London: T&T Clark, 2010).

deities and the deified dead. As a result, the law of the Rebellious Son perpetuates and inculcates the same ideology as the other laws discussed above. Yahweh is to be worshipped as the only divine being in the place he has chosen; a central ideological message of Deuteronomy.

6.5 Summary

This chapter has interrogated biblical episodes of consumption which feature aspects comparable to the law of the Rebellious Son. This included the notion of rebelliousness, the rejection of Yahweh's laws, the description of the crime being 'evil' and the judgement and execution of the 'criminal'. These features were found to be associated with consumption activities that effected commensality with deities and divine beings that make Yahweh jealous. Other gods and the deified dead are brought into social relationships with their worshippers by means of the food and drink they share with them. But this simultaneously threatens Yahweh's position as Israel's sole legitimate deity. Texts which feature the lexemes זלל and סבא also portray scenes of consumption that are non-Yahwistic in nature. In addition, there is no evidence to suggest that large quantities of food and alcohol were consumed like in the passages dealt with in the previous two chapters. As a result, it is clear that the crime of the Rebellious Son, the one who is accused of being a זולל and a סבא, was participating in the worship of other deities or the divine dead.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

This thesis has offered a socio-religious re-evaluation of the Law of the Rebellious Son (Deut 21:18-21). This text has been typically understood to condemn the excessive - and economically detrimental - consumption of food and alcohol. But all too often, this understanding has lacked sufficient justification. I have thus offered a more nuanced and critically robust understanding of the Law of the Rebellious Son by interrogating biblical depictions of excessive and 'deviant' consumption of food and alcohol, and contextualising them both anthropologically and archaeologically. In particular, I have examined the social and religious roles of consumables in ancient Israel and Judah, drawing on archaeo-anthropological theories emphasising the materiality of 'things' as impactful and vibrant social agents. By viewing food and alcohol as social agents which draw together divine, human, and animal members of the household, and by bringing attention to their capacity to construct, maintain, disrupt, or destroy identities and relationships, food and alcohol are no longer rendered as passive, inert, inconsequential substances. Instead, they are revealed to be vital to the socio-religious networks of the household and wider community and are laden with religious import. In this way, 'normative' usage of food and alcohol which is imperative to social and religious cohesion is socially constructed and enforced – and might therefore be employed to manifest or mark socio-religious deviancy.

Previous scholarship on the Rebellious Son tended not to contextualise the crimes of being סבא and זולל within a socio-religious framework of consumable, embodied material culture. Instead, modern, Western anxieties about the inability to control the appetite and the financial strain caused by excessive consumption were read into Deut 21:18-21. This interpretation has often been encouraged by an uncritical reading of Prov 23:19-21, which interpreters also typically viewed as warning against associating with the זולל וסבא because of the perceived economic ruin exorbitant eating and drinking might generate. Such a view is also the result of a lack of appropriate contextualisation. By contrast, comprehending the socio-religious functions of eating and drinking in an ancient southwest Asian context provides an understanding of perceived 'normative'

and ‘abnormal’ consumption which may discourage the distorting impact of modern Western perspectives from being projected on to ancient texts. One may even say that the reason biblical scholars have struggled to find a convincing explanation for the capital punishment of a child who apparently eats and drinks too much is because the religious roles of food and drink have not previously been taken seriously.

The argument and analysis offered here seeks to challenge and destabilise commonly held assumptions about the roles of food and alcohol in ancient Israel and Judah, and offers instead a fresh look at how the social and religious functions of food and alcohol might better contextualise the biblical crime of the Rebellious Son. This thesis builds on the work of previous scholars who have documented the agricultural and pastoral productions of food, diet, and cooking methods of the ancient Israelites and Judahites. I extend this work, however, by integrating these aspects of the foodways of ancient Israel and Judah into the foundational presupposition that no aspect of ancient life can be separated from the inherently religious and ritualised world of its inhabitants. My approach to food and alcohol in ancient Israel and Judah does not distinguish between the religious and the secular. To impose such a dichotomy onto an ancient culture is deeply problematic; not only is it inherently anachronistic, it risks distorting the significance of many daily activities.

Ancient Israelites and Judahites lived in a world in which the divine – in all its forms – permeated the lives of the living. While previous scholarship has tended to relate food and alcohol to religion in an ‘adjacent’ or symbolic way, I have taken food and alcohol to be a vital expression of inherently religious life in all of its constituent parts: production, preparation, consumption and expulsion. Intimately related to this approach is the way in which I have not taken food as a separate or self-contained phenomenon in relation to other household processes. By this, I mean that rather than studying food and alcohol as a static and non-impacting item of consumption, it is instead inextricably entangled with other household processes and members in a multiplicity of directions and modes. The fertility of crops and animals, and the resulting livelihood and continued survival of the household, was dependent on the supra-natural or magical beings on which the Israelites and Judahites were so dependent.

These beings secured the rains, the growth of crops, the perpetuation of animals, and offered protection from diseases, plagues and conflict. At the same time, goats, sheep and cattle were dependent on their human carers for their nourishment and shelter, but reciprocally provided the wool, dairy and traction power on which humans also were dependent. After death, animals also provided their bones, skins and organs for human use. The land depended on animals for dung for crop fertilisation and ploughing fields, and humans for planting seed that crops could grow. Whether deities or the divine dead, supra-natural beings were understood to provide blessings of fertility and goodwill, depending on whether they had been offered sacrifices and/or included in communal household meals. Land, animal, deity, and human were entangled in multiple ever-shifting dependencies, dependencies ultimately related to the provision, production and consumption of food and alcohol.

As such, this thesis has also reassessed the notion of sacrifice by examining the contributing roles of sacrificial animals to the survival of the ancient Israelite and Judahite household. Given that animals contributed their lifetime products of dairy, wool, traction power and dung to the household, the sacrifice of these animals was bound up with the loss of these vital contributions and indeed the social personhood of animals themselves. Vegetal and liquid sacrifices were ubiquitous, and arguably more central to shared consumption with deities and the divine dead than sacrificial meat. Previous scholarship has tended to focus on the presentation of sacrifice in biblical texts. Rather than working with this constructed idea of sacrifice for literate elites, I locate sacrifice within its agricultural and pastoral context which acknowledges the agency of food and animals. Ordinary people likely did not view sacrifice in the same way as biblical scribes - nor indeed, biblical scholars; instead, it likely indexed a variety of embedded aspects of household life dependent on agrarian and pastoral strategies.

The approaches I have used in this research points to further avenues for research. Using ‘entanglement’ as a lens (as I have done in this thesis) to interpret Lev 22:1-16, the priests’ and their family members’ consumption of the sacred portion of food may be interpreted with new insight and rigour. The food

portion can be eaten by the priest's purchased slave or unmarried daughter, but not a priest who has become unclean. Thus, there appears to be an interesting theme of dependency on the priest, as well as the disruption and reconstruction of identities through consumption in this text. Many other texts entailing consumption would benefit from an approach which shifts the typically anthropocentric gaze of the biblical scholar on to the agency of foodstuffs.

Each participant within the entangled household contributed to the survival and sustenance of the group and at the same time was constantly drawn into further care for, and support from, its other members. We thus cannot continue to perceive of food as in some way separate or distinct from all its inter-connected relationships within this socially enmeshed household unit. Through using archaeo-anthropological methods I have challenged modern, Western conceptions of foodstuffs in biblical texts. The creation and destruction of food fundamentally impacts other things and other beings socially, and thus is an agent. Food items and their production, preparation, sacrifice, consumption, and expulsion played ritual roles. In this way food and alcohol were socio-ritual agents impacting other entangled beings. Food cannot be separated from the inherently ritual life of the household. It carried substantial socio-religious baggage associated with 'appropriate' consumption and 'non-normative' consumption.

Alcohol, in the form of beer or wine, might be seen as even more intensely bound up with social relationships between humans and deities. While there are select works that give attention to alcohol, thorough integrations of food *and* alcohol, and discussions of how both contributed to the social and religious lives of household members, are generally lacking in biblical scholarship. By contrast, my research shows that alcohol was as socially entangled as solid food items in terms of its production and consumption, and in addition, was an agent in that it induced psychopharmacological affects rendering it conducive to a broader range of intense religious and social experiences. Biblical texts depict Yahweh growing vines, treading grapes and controlling wine production in the land (Isa 5:1-2; Deut 28:39; Jer 48:33; Joel 3:13), and the Sumerian goddess Ninkasi is associated with beer production. These examples suggest that the divine was imagined to be closely associated with alcohol. Alcohol products

therefore cannot be divorced from religious life. Not only was its production reliant on the fertility bestowed on the land by deities and the divine dead, but it was also used reciprocally in offerings to Yahweh (Num 28:7; Exod 29:40) and other deities (Hos 4:18; Isa 65:11, Jer 7:18). Alcohol was an important social agent in that it contributed to the negotiation of household relationships between, and among, the living and the dead, and the construction of identities of those who participated in its production.

An important outcome of my focus on alcohol products in this thesis is the recognition of the lack of attention afforded to beer in biblical scholarship. Associated with the elite, and cast in the bible as central to predominantly male ritual, wine has overshadowed beer and the dominant role it had in the household as a substance consumed by all members and a constructer of socio-religious relationships. I have highlighted this problem in biblical scholarship and attempted to relocate beer in biblical texts and household life. Alcohol was a sacrificial item, and while most scholarly focus when addressing sacrifice falls on animal sacrifice, it is evident that the ubiquity of alcoholic offerings demonstrates alcohol's importance as a ritual agent in household culture as well as in texts. This thesis has treated alcohol – which is usually side-lined in studies on food - equally with food as a ritual agent in the entanglement of everyday life of the ancient Israelites and Judahites.

Viewing food and alcohol as agents within the vibrant and entangled context of survival in ancient Israel and Judah shifts the typically anthropocentric gaze of the biblical scholar to the other 'things' of the household and their social lives. By focusing on food as material culture I have established the need for more biblical scholars to integrate an awareness of the materiality of things, and the roles of things, into biblical scholarship. The way in which food and alcohol are regarded as agents may well be developed by exploring their impact on the senses in future research. Eating and drinking stimulate not just taste and smell but also touch, sight, hearing, and memory, which have their own impacts on individual mood and thus on social interactions with others.

I have mostly focused on 'ordinary' household consumption. However, using an approach similar to that offered here could well be fruitful for re-evaluating royal

feasts in ancient Israel and Judah, and the Bible, by viewing food and alcohol as ritual agents in royal social entanglements. This would arguably offer new ways to understand political negotiations and the transformation of relationships between participants of different statuses that would occur at such royal banquets.

I have argued that the accusation of being a זולל וסבא, found in the Law of the Rebellious Son and Prov 23:19-21, is best understood as indexing religious anxieties about 'deviant' consumption. While some scholars have labelled excessive consumption as deviant, I have drawn a distinction between these two categories.[1007] In most biblical texts, excessive consumption of both alcohol and food is not condemned, prohibited or punished. Rather, access to excessive consumption is generally considered to be a blessing from Yahweh.

For the biblical scribes, however, such a blessing must be accorded its correct socio-religious response. Yahweh's provision of food, and the shared commensality between the Israelites and their deity, creates and positively reinforces social bonds because Israel has reacted reciprocally in consumption. Conversely, failure to reciprocate creates disruption in the social relationship with Yahweh. It is therefore when such a blessing is not treated appropriately, or is misused, that condemnation is then levelled. Excessive consumption itself is not seen as inherently problematic; the improper response, however, is.

In ancient Israel and Judah famine was an ever-present threat due to environmental conditions such as drought, diseases, and other disasters. For the majority of Israelites and Judahites, food production was therefore a constant activity and surplus food was uncommon; anything that could be stored for harder times would have been carefully managed. Animals were rarely slaughtered for meat as their lifetime products of dairy, wool, traction power, and dung were essential to the continued survival of the household. Thus, amidst the multitude of biblical texts which speak of Yahweh's provision of surfeits of food - allowing for the engorgement and fattening of Israel - such

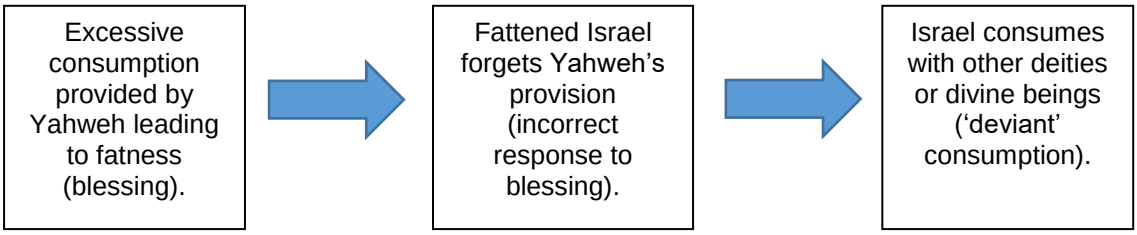
[1007] Jonathan P. Burnside, *The Signs of Sin: Seriousness of Offence in Biblical Law* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 55; Elizabeth Bellefontaine, 'Deuteronomy 21: 18-21: Reviewing the Case of the Rebellious Son', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 13 (1979), 22.

excessive consumption can only be seen as the result of blessing and care from Yahweh (Jer 31:14; Joel 2:19; Ps 37:19). Yahweh wants Israel to be well fed. What is not perceived to be acceptable, however, is when elite, wealthy Israelites or Judahites are feasting while the poor and vulnerable of society are suffering from lack of food. Prophetic voices especially criticise those excessive consumers who have manipulated or disadvantaged deprived members of society in order to achieve and sustain their wealthy positions (Amos 6:4-6; Jer 5:26-28). The crime in these cases is not the excess of their consumption, but the means by which they achieved their wealth and the neglect of those needing aid.

In some texts, Israel responds to divinely approved engorgement or fattening by becoming self-secure and forgetting Yahweh was the source of the bountiful food (Deut 32:13-15; Ezek 16:13-15). What is highlighted repeatedly in these texts is the bodily experience of consumption; the engorgement and enlarging of Israel. There appears to be a connection between the physiological transformation and the psychological effect of this transformation, especially in terms of the cultural memories of the Israelites. These consumption episodes occur in the context of the wilderness, prior to entry into the Promised Land. Such a literary setting creates and emphasises the antiquity of Israel's total dependence on Yahweh in a hostile environment by also depicting Israel as a child in need of nursing (Deut 32:13-14, 18), or swaddling (Ezek 16:4), or sheep in need of pasturing (Hos 13:5-8). Despite Yahweh's 'adoption' and feeding of Israel in the wilderness, and additionally, his saving acts in the exodus from Egypt, Israel forgets its god. It is this forgetting, seen to be directly related to the fatness and stability experienced bodily by Israel, which is criticised in biblical texts. Israel's fatness is a blessing and should be responded to as such. Again, the excessive consumption therefore is not at issue, only the response.

This phenomenon of forgetting, however, does have some relevance to 'deviant' eating. Fattened Israel's forgetting of Yahweh's provision of abundant food is frequently paired with the forsaking of Yahweh (Neh 9:25-7; Deut 32:15; Hos 13:5-8), or even the explicit mentioning of the worship of other deities (Deut 31:2; 32:17). While in these texts acts of consumption are not explicitly stated,

we may envisage a domino effect leading from excessive consumption to 'deviant' consumption:



While there may be a causal sequence, there is still a stark separation in biblical texts between the act of excessive consumption, which is regarded positively, and 'deviant' consumption, which is regarded negatively. Excessive consumption with Yahweh is social, but any form of consumption with other deities is anti-social with respect to Yahweh, and thus 'deviant'. The modern construct that excessive consumption is deviant because it represents lack of self-control and financial irresponsibility is, as this research has shown, misplaced. Instead, only by interrogating the religious context of the text can a more reliable interpretation be found.

Like the excessive consumption of food, drunkenness is regarded as a positive experience in most occurrences of alcohol consumption in biblical texts. The most frequently attested psychoactive association of alcohol is the experience of joy. Individuals' hearts are described as 'merry' and nationwide despair is epitomised by the lack of alcohol. Like the blessing of abundant food from Yahweh, drunkenness is perceived in biblical texts to be divinely provided and approved (Eccl 9:7; Ps 104:14-15). In this way alcohol was a primary consumable in festal activities, encouraging positive reinforcement of social bonds across household units and the heavenly and earthly realms.

Alcohol was likely also perceived to have aphrodisiacal qualities (as it did in neighbouring cultures) and was thus an agent in sexual activity and possibly even procreative action. So potent was alcohol's ability to fuel sexual desire that it is used in multiple narratives as an agent in the attempted manipulation of people who have no prior intention of erotic behaviour (2 Sam 11:13; Gen 19:31-36). Alcohol thus also acted as a socio-sexual lubricant and is used euphemistically in erotic texts such as Song of Songs to describe the wet and

fragrant aspects of intercourse. Indeed, intoxication by alcohol and intoxication by sexual desire are complementary bed mates which surprisingly privilege female sexual pleasure.

On the whole, excessive alcohol consumption is portrayed positively in biblical texts. There are, however, select circumstances in which it is not deemed to be appropriate. Alcohol appears to be disruptive to the social network when it is consumed excessively by those performing intermediary roles between the people and Yahweh. Kings must not drink large quantities of alcohol lest it causes them to forget to do Yahweh's justice and protect the poor and vulnerable members of society. Priests and prophets, as the mouthpieces and cultic specialists of Yahweh, cannot be muddled by intoxication and fail to maintain the social and cultic order Yahweh requires. The condemnation directed at drunken priests, prophets and kings, is not related to lack of control or the economic burden excessive drinking could cause. Instead, it is the wider socio-religious impact of such inebriation that is problematic; it is disruptive and potentially harmful to the social relationship between Yahweh and Israel as a whole. This issue concerns broader socio-religious implications of the failure to perform divinely ordained roles due to alcohol. It is not about the effects of inebriation at the individual level. The so-called 'civil' and 'sacred' spheres are not separate spheres at all, they are entirely porous and integrated in a way that we should as modern scholars be more conscious of, rather than creating a distinction which was never really there.

Yahweh's role in the consumption of alcohol is most viscerally expressed in his force-feeding those he punishes with the Cup of Wrath. The use of this well-known motif depends upon the extension or subversion of the known qualities of inebriation. Yahweh is therefore perceived to be intimately involved with drunkenness itself, using it as a tool to convey his wrath. Alcohol here is not an agent of joy or sexual passion, but an agent of destruction, shame and despair. Just as wine can be embodied, and is experienced bodily, so too can Yahweh's anger and displeasure be imagined by imposing known experiential phenomena of drunkenness onto descriptions of Yahweh's prophesied punishments. The Cup of Wrath motif should not be taken as evidence for a condemnation of drunkenness generally. It is a specific trope used not because drunkenness is

perceived to be deviant, but because the intense sensory and embodied experiences of drunkenness were well known and easily manipulated into an evocative and persuasive constellation of terrifying images.

The excessive consumption of food and alcohol in Hebrew Bible texts is not condemned, prohibited, or punished in the same way as the crime of the Rebellious Son. Criticism is levelled at elites in positions of power who should be serving and aiding those segments of society which are dependent on them. Such criticism is not about the deviance of excess, a modern construction, but instead is concerned for the maintenance of socio-religious order by kings, priests, prophets and others in positions of wealth. Thus, the typical construal of the crime of the Rebellious Son as a 'glutton and a drunkard', a person who consumes uncontrollably and brings about economic difficulty to his household, is erroneous. This conclusion is further supported by a thorough interrogation of consumption episodes elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible which bear resemblance to the Law of the Rebellious Son.

This thesis uses three features of the Law of the Rebellious Son to identify scenarios in which consumption was regarded comparably with the crime of being a זולל וסבא. These features are: 1) 'rebellious' behaviour 2) the judgement and/or execution of the consumers 3) the description of consumption, and associated acts, as 'evil'. Texts exhibiting similarities to that of the Rebellious Son display contexts of consumption which disrupt the social network between Israel and Yahweh. By participating in shared consumption which results in social bonding between human consumers and gods or the divine dead, the Israelites' relationship with Yahweh is rendered anti-social. In response to this Yahweh becomes jealous, angry and destructive. Yahweh cannot abide any other divine beings in his social network. In the texts addressed, those who should worship Yahweh in response to his provision of food and fertility reject him by eating with other gods instead. These deities, from the perspective of the scribes, were not the ones who took care of Israel in the wilderness and are not the ones who continue to sustain and nourish the Israelites and Judahites in the land. Yahweh thus resolves the disruption to the social network he is a part of by destroying the consumers and thus repositioning himself into the central role of the social network from which he was displaced by those other divine beings.

Even within Yahweh's own cultic sphere, food and alcohol must be treated appropriately. Because of food's nature as an agent that can allocate identity and status to individual consumers, the portioning out and distribution of food is particularly laden with socio-religious significance. If Yahweh is not provided with the best portion of food, the portion that is prescribed for him, his food is mistreated, which effects the disruption of the social ordering of sacrifice and the proper maintenance of the cultic sphere in general. Similarly, though alcohol is conducive to certain religious experiences and contact with particular divine beings, it appears to be out of place with regard to Yahweh. A divine experience with Yahweh cannot be coerced out of him by being inebriated in his presence. Yahweh's provision of alcohol for the inducement of joy cannot be used to manipulate him into social contact, as though he were powerless over the desires of his priests.[1008]

The significance of these 'deviant' consumption narratives is fully apparent in the context of the socio-religious centrality of food and alcohol in ancient Israelite and Judahite life. Being aware of the religious notions carried by food and alcohol, and the way they connect to other inherently religious aspects of household existence, allows us to understand why 'right' consumption was so important to biblical scribes. Eating and drinking practices have not been afforded the weight and significance in scholarly interpretations that they had for the biblical scribes. This thesis thus remedies this oversight by paying attention to the ways in which food and alcohol were intimately a part of the world inhabited by deities, the divine dead and underworldly entities. This thesis offers an alternative interpretation of the crime of the Rebellious Son which contributes more broadly to biblical scholarship by demonstrating the need to contextualise laws in their socio-religious milieus. I have drawn attention to the need for caution when interpreting laws or other biblical texts so that modern constructions and/or preferences are not imposed on ancient texts anachronistically. My socio-religious interpretation perhaps has ramifications for some New Testament texts. Notably, Jesus states that he has been accused of being a 'glutton and a drunkard' and keeping the company of tax collectors and

[1008] As discussed in the previous chapter, this interpretation of Lev 10:1-9 is speculative due to the highly ambiguous nature of the text.

sinners (Matt 11:19; Luk 7:34). It may now be beneficial to think of this accusation in terms of indexing socio-religious deviancy rather than excessive consumption; tax collectors and sinners representing associations considered 'other' by the Judean circles criticising Jesus.

To conclude, the Rebellious Son is not guilty of eating and drinking excessively. Rather, he is accused of participating in non-Yahwistic practices, which inevitably include, and are marked by, shared consumption with deities that are not 'legitimate' in the ideological view of biblical scribes. Excessive consumption, the traditional understanding of the crime of the Rebellious Son, is not viewed as a problematic behaviour in biblical texts. 'Deviant' consumption, however, like other forms of non-Yahwistic practice, is deemed by biblical scribes to be a threat to the wider community and must be dealt with in such a way as to remove that threat from society. The statement made by the Rebellious Son's mother and father that he is a זולל וסבא (Deut 21:20) can now be understood to elucidate the specific nature of his defiance and rebellion against Yahweh; **he was eating and drinking with other divine beings**. Biblical scholars have wrestled with the Law of the Rebellious Son because stoning a person, possibly a child, for eating and drinking too much seemed like an uncharacteristically extreme reaction. In the context I have established however, the capital punishment of the Rebellious Son is coherent with other uses of capital punishment in biblical texts dealing with so-called idolatry, apostasy, and conjuration. Death, throughout the Hebrew Bible, is Yahweh's typical response to sociability with other divine beings. Yahweh is, after all, a very jealous god.

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